



Who Says You Can't Podcasts Series 2 Episode 3: Don Strapzy

[Music]

Don Strapzy: [00:00:03] And the guy after the game is like, ah, why are you filming anyway? You'll never be famous. You will never be famous. Just give it up. Yeah? And obviously we was just laughing at him, so we called the episode –

Rick: Well I'm laughing at your impression.

Don Strapzy: [00:00:14] We called – we – yeah.

Rick: Your impression [unintelligible 00:00:15] and I don't even know the guy.

Don Strapzy: [00:00:16] We called the episode You'll Never be Famous, and every time we've played them, we've used that same clip.

Rick: Hello and welcome to Series Two of Who Says You Can't? The podcast from EE that celebrates those who fly in the face of convention. I'm Rick Edwards, and in this new series I'll be talking to people who didn't wait for an invite to create their dreams, people who have used all the digital tools at their disposal to make it, and who took 'you can't do that' as a challenge and just did it anyway. Each guest has handed over their phone for me to have a good old look through, and I'll be asking them questions based on what I dig up. If you want to get a peek at what I find, you can see them on EE's YouTube channel, now.
Today's guest is Don Strapzy of the SE Dons, taking Sunday League to the big leagues. Who says you can't? Don Strapzy, thanks for joining us. How are you?

Don Strapzy: [00:01:12] I'm good, thank you, Rick, man, yourself?

Rick: Yeah, very good, man. I'm looking forward to this. You started out as a rapper, so where did the idea of starting a Sunday League football team come in?

Don Strapzy: [00:01:12] Yeah, I've always played Sunday League football. Football was always my first passion, so I've always loved football, and literally I wasn't playing, because I was so busy and I couldn't commit to playing Saturday League football, and playing Saturday takes up your whole Saturday and you – it requires training in a week, etcetera, all them kind of things.



[00:01:41] But yeah, we started it back in 2004 realistically just for me to play football. Nothing about I'm going to do this with it or do that with it, I just wanted to play again. That's where it started.

Rick: Because I've got an Instagram post here from you from 2014, 'made a Sunday League football team. First training session tonight. Feels good to be back on a grass. Season kicks off Sunday. #SEDons.' Now you make it sound quite easy.

Don Strapzy: [00:02:04] Yeah, yeah.

Rick: But like I know how difficult it is to get out like five people to play on my five-a-side team.

Don Strapzy: [00:02:07] I was just about to say I think that training session was probably about four or five people.

Rick: Yeah.

Don Strapzy: [00:02:11] Yeah, I just tried to make it glamorous with a tweet.

Rick: Well, yeah, but it works now though.

Don Strapzy: [00:02:14] Yeah, it works now though. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rick: I knew. I knew all along.

Don Strapzy: [00:02:17] Yeah, yeah.

Rick: Was it all mates and people that you've played with before that you got together?

Don Strapzy: [00:02:22] Yeah, that's what I mean, you're right, it's – I was pretty fortunate, it was quite easy for me because I've got such a big network of friends where I live. So, it was pretty much, cool, we're going to start a team. We got the paper out, wrote down a bunch of names, got 'em all on the phone, they're all up for it. Cool. We've got training tomorrow boys; I think five people turned up. The rest was just like just tell me when the game is, we're good to go, do you know what I mean? And that's it. We just ran with it like that. And they loved it and we managed to stay consistent.



Rick: How was the first game?

Don Strapzy: [00:02:49] We lost one-nil, actually, I remember, to a team called Manor Wood.

Rick: Did you film it?

Don Strapzy: [00:02:54] We didn't. We didn't film the first one, no. We started – our first game was in – it would have been I think the 2014, '15 season. We started filming in 2017, so we'd done about two seasons without filming.

Rick: But still same kind of vibe?

Don Strapzy: [00:03:07] It was exactly the same.

Rick: Same kind of feel?

Don Strapzy: [00:03:08] It was exactly the same. It was still the whole same banter, taking it way more serious than we should of, do you know what I mean?

Rick: Well that's what makes it fun though.

Don Strapzy: [00:03:15] Yeah, that's what I mean. Still keeping the top goal scorer tally, arguing with refs and that. Do you know what I mean? It's not changed, it really hasn't changed, we've just got better.

Rick: The thing about Sunday League is – like I've played Sunday League as, you know, so many people –

Don Strapzy: [00:03:29] Yeah.

Rick: – in the UK have. And when I think about it, I imagine, okay, teams playing in a park, pitch not great, maybe a bit of a slope. In terms of supporters, old man and his dog, maybe –

Don Strapzy: [00:03:41] Old man. Yeah, yeah.

Rick: – maybe like a girlfriend –

Don Strapzy: [00:03:44] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rick: – if you're lucky. But then I look at this, this pitch invasion.



Don Strapzy: [00:03:49] Yeah.

Rick: A Sunday League team. Genuinely, I've never seen anything like this.

Don Strapzy: [00:03:52] Yeah. Yeah.

Rick: There's hundreds of people.

Don Strapzy: [00:03:54] There's thousands. There was thousands.

Rick: It's mental.

Don Strapzy: [00:03:56] Yeah, yeah, yeah, I mean we sort of – we were saying afterwards we should have got in touch with Guinness Book of Records and that –

Rick: Yeah.

Don Strapzy: – do you know what I mean? This was in April just gone.

Rick: Mm.

Don Strapzy: [00:04:05] A cup final, Paul Picard cup final against one of our rival teams, two best teams in the league, us and them. And I think there was like 3,000 people that turned out. It was 2,800 or something silly like that.

Rick: Mm.

Don Strapzy: [00:04:16] Crazy man.

Rick: You can't have imagined that you were going to get to that point –

Don Strapzy: [00:04:21] Mm.

Rick: – when you started this team in 2014.

Don Strapzy: [00:04:24] Nah. I would be lying if I said I would imagine that, because like I said, it originally started as I just want to play football with my friends to see what we can do, to see if we can win a cup or two. I mean I always think big, and I've always been ambitious, and so I would never write something off. But I can't sit here and say that that's what I imagined, so it's crazy.

Rick: How did the other teams respond? Because everyone else is just playing



Sunday League with –

Don Strapzy: [00:04:48] Normal Sunday League. Yeah.

Rick: Yeah, normal Sunday League –

Don Strapzy: [00:04:50] Yeah.

Rick: – and then you lot descend –

Don Strapzy: [00:04:51] Yeah.

Rick: – and it's crazy.

Don Strapzy: [00:04:53] Yeah, I mean when we first started bringing out the cameras, like other teams, there's always a bit of banter like oh [you should] bring the camera out, all this rubbish. The majority of them responded well, and I've got to thank them for that, because we do, we give each other grief, do you know what I mean?

Rick: Mm.

Don Strapzy: [00:05:07] Then you get some teams that are a bit negative towards it. No one's ever had a problem with it, it's just that some teams they just don't seem to like what we represent really kind of thing, they may be a bit old-school, do you know what I mean?

Rick: Mm. Mm.

Don Strapzy: [00:05:18] But other than that, 95 percent of the teams it's all love, it's all positive.

Rick: I'm watching it and thinking I mean I'd love to play against you guys –

Don Strapzy: [00:05:25] Mm. Mm. Mm.

Rick: – because, yeah, exactly, you get to watch back –

Don Strapzy: [unintelligible 00:05:27]. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rick: – your – yeah, like it's cool.

Don Strapzy: [00:05:29] Yeah.



Rick: And also, I think what's really nice is that when you – because you do a lot of the commentary work –

Don Strapzy: [00:05:34] Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Mm.

Rick: – now you're not playing.

Don Strapzy: [00:05:36] Mm.

Rick: And it's funny –

Don Strapzy: [00:05:37] Yeah.

Rick: – but also you do give respect to the opposition players –

Don Strapzy: [00:05:39] Yeah, yeah, I try to. Yeah.

Rick: – like you'll say this guy –

Don Strapzy: [00:05:41] Yeah.

Rick: – and you maybe know some of their names –

Don Strapzy: [00:05:43] Yeah.

Rick: – you'll be like this guy has been playing well all game, giving us difficulty out here.

Don Strapzy: [00:05:47] Yeah.

Rick: Obviously it's banter towards the other team, but –

Don Strapzy: [00:05:49] Yeah, of course. Yeah.

Rick: – it's also very inclusive.

Don Strapzy: [00:05:51] Yeah, no, I try to, I try to, because it's true, at the end of the day the fact of the matter is it's always going to be a biased view realistically because I'm probably going –

Rick: Yeah.



Don Strapzy: – to show more clips from the Dons –

Rick: Yeah.

Don Strapzy: – than I show of the other team. But I always try to be fair. Like you said, we do give the other team banter. I do it in my commentary, so I think the best thing I can always do is highlight a good player. Because the standard we play is quite good as well, so I'm always trying to be fair in my commentary.

Rick: So, why is it then do you think that SE Dons have managed to attract this massive fanbase in a way that, well, as far as I know, no other Sunday League team has ever done.

Don Strapzy: [00:06:23] Yeah, yeah. Sunday League football is a big culture in England, in the UK, so I think that even before I used to have a football team I used to – like I say, and I used to go on YouTube and type 'Sunday League tackles,' 'Sunday League arguments,' do you know what I mean? 'Sunday League goals.'

Rick: [unintelligible 00:06:37].

Don Strapzy: [00:06:37] You're laughing because you've probably done it.

Rick: Yeah, of course.

Don Strapzy: [00:06:39] Do you know what I mean? So, I think you're always going to have that attraction because it's Sunday League football, but I also think we're very authentic with what we do. It's not gimmicky. You can see that we always say what we want to say. A lot of reality TV or professional football, you're never going to really get an interview from their captain saying do you know what, yeah, we came here, we worked harder than them, they don't want it, [00:07:00] we're going to turn them over, this is our cup, all that. You can't do it, you know, where we can. We say what we want, we're bringing passion and we're bringing the competitive nature to Sunday League football, and I think it's – people want to see it.

Like I remember, I never forget the Roy Keane and Patrick Vieira argument in the tunnel. Like I loved it. Gary Neville kissing [unintelligible 00:07:19] at the Cop end. For us we've got that with ah, we never lose to Peckham, this is our ground, all this kind of stuff, slapping your chest every time you score a goal. I think it's just people are engaged with the authenticity of it and the realness



of it. The stories behind it, the messages that's going on, and I think people are just – they've taken to it.

We spend time with supporters, [00:07:39] we don't even call them fans, we call them family, do you know what I mean? We spend time with them, we take pictures with them, we speak to them. You can come on a side-line and stand – I've got like eight year olds standing next to me when I'm giving it to the ref, do you know what I mean, and like –

Rick: They're learning young.

Don Strapzy: – do you know what I mean? Yeah, yeah, so you can be there and see us. You're going to see me walking through Lewisham, you're going to see the boys in your local, do you know what I mean? So [00:08:02] I think that's a big factor. I think that's –

Rick: So, it's connection?

Don Strapzy: – there's a connection, people can feel the connection and they relate to it. They relate to what we're doing.

Rick: It is interesting actually, because at this time, like you say, professional football is so policed –

Don Strapzy: [00:08:16] Mm.

Rick: – and monitored and carefully sort of crafted. It's so polished, isn't it?

Don Strapzy: [00:08:22] Mm. Mm. Mm.

Rick: Which I guess that growing up it didn't feel –

Don Strapzy: [00:08:26] It didn't feel like that –

Rick: – that that –

Don Strapzy: – did it?

Rick: – was the case.

Don Strapzy: [00:08:27] Yeah.

Rick: So, now you're kind of providing an alternative.



- Don Strapzy: [00:08:30] Of course.
- Rick: Just like a different way of supporting a football team where you can really feel like you're part of it.
- Don Strapzy: [00:08:35] Yeah, yeah, I think that's it. I think also, look, there's a lot of money in the game now, like sponsorships, etcetera, you know, you can't say or do certain things. You know we talk about some of the footballers that I speak to and they love the Dons, but I couldn't get them in a shirt, do you know what I mean, because of whatever. And I think with us, we're able to do what we want and say what we want, and we're not going to change that. [00:08:56] Like I had a sponsorship offer from a gambling company that wanted to give us good money which would have helped me out massively over a six month period, but we refused it because it's not what we want to – we're not trying to promote that, do you know what I mean? Like I said, I am a man who grew up watching professional football, and a Man United fan, loved it, but as I've got older I have, I've just pulled away, because I just feel like it's too – like you said, it's just polished, it's so polished. [00:09:21] And as human beings, you know, we're drawn to drama whether we like it or not, and I think it's just so polished that I sort of know what you're going to say. Like when they ask you how did the game go, I know what they're going to say.
- Rick: Yeah. Yeah.
- Don Strapzy: [00:09:29] You're going to score a hattrick at a rival's ground, and they're going to ask you how did it feel, you know, oh you know, oh the boys they worked hard, and give credit to them –
- Rick: Yeah, it's not – yeah, not –
- Don Strapzy: – do you know what I mean?
- Rick: – really about me.
- Don Strapzy: [00:09:38] Yeah. Yeah. So, I'm just not –
- Rick: Glad to chip in.
- Don Strapzy: [00:09:41] Yeah, do you know what I mean? So, you look at Conor McGregor, why was we so drawn to him, because he's just outspoken,



[professional].

Rick: It feels raw, doesn't it?

Don Strapzy: [00:09:46] Yeah, it's raw, I think that's the right word. And I think with football now it's just very polished. They're fantastic players, no one can ever take that away, but it's just too – just boring really, do you know what I mean? I find myself struggling to watch a whole game.

Rick: When you first started thinking okay, I'm going to start filming stuff –

Don Strapzy: [00:10:03] Mm.

Rick: – what was the aim?

Don Strapzy: [00:10:06] I do music as well.

Rick: Yeah.

Don Strapzy: [00:10:08] I needed to find a way to interact with my supporters musically. I wasn't really one for social media, like I wasn't – like I think back then it was Facebook and Instagram and stuff. But it's funny 'cause I'm on camera all the time, I'm always a bit funny with cameras sometimes, I'm not really fussed about being on Snapchat and all these kinds of things, so I wasn't really interacting, I wasn't tweeting much, I wasn't doing much with my supporters, and so they only heard my music.

[00:10:30] So originally I said to Chris, look, I've got a Sunday League team, you know, and it's banter, like it's sick, like come and film the games, because then what – originally it would be like a vlog that I can put out once a week and just so the supporters can kind of get to know me. So that was the original plan, a way to just basically show my character and interact with people. Because a lot of my music was based on football anyway, a lot of my punchlines and metaphors are football-based. So, it just made sense for people to want to see Don Strapzy play football.

[00:10:57] But it just grew from that, and I quickly realised, you know what, it's not about me, like I'm the face of it, but there's 16 people in this changing room all with their own individual characters. All right, they're not as known as much as me, but it just connected well, like I put it out there and people related to it and it just grew. But originally it was for me to connect to my audience.

Rick: So, are you still balancing the music and Dons now?



Don Strapzy: [00:11:19] Yeah, so that's a good one, because my music had to take a back step for a bit, for a couple of years. Just the start of the new year I've got back into my management and we're going to start working on an EP, so the music is going to come again. It's just it hasn't been as consistent as the Dons, but at the same time the Dons has allowed me to sort of rebrand myself and it's – they both help each other. When I put music out it benefits the Dons. When I'm putting the Dons out it benefits the music, so it works hand-in-hand, it's about marrying them both.

Rick: Along the way with Dons, have you come across people who have not been into it, doubters basically?

Don Strapzy: [00:11:50] Yeah, yeah, of course, of course. And it's funny because one of our most biggest episodes is called You'll Never Be Famous. We beat a team called Bickley, we beat them 3-2, and they just don't like us. They're a bit old-fashioned, they just don't like us. Every time we play them there's comments and remarks, and the guy after the game is like ah, why are you filming anyway, you'll never be famous, you will never be famous, just give it up, yeah. And obviously we were just laughing at [00:12:16] him, so we called the episode –

Rick: Well I'm laughing at your impression.

Don Strapzy: – we called – we called – yeah –

Rick: And I don't even know the guy.

Don Strapzy: – we called the episode You'll Never Be Famous. And every time we've played them, we've used that same clip. We could potentially be facing them in a cup final this year which we hope we get. Yeah, so that's an example.
[00:12:31] And you're always going to get – like I said, you do get doubters. Sometimes you can doubt yourself, like, but my whole life I've been a risktaker my whole life. I've never played it safe. So, for me I've always enjoyed the challenge, I call it the beautiful struggle sometimes because you find yourself and it's like it's a chase, it's the game, like it's an addiction, it's like a gene that I have. And doubting can even come from your closest, that's [00:12:54] sometimes because they care, and they want to make sure that you're doing something proper.
I've just had the ability to ignore the doubt, man, and just find it within myself to keep going, but, yeah, You'll Never Be Famous, check that out, it's



funny. You know it happens, and that's the game, and that's life. But if you listen to other people's opinion you're going to just try and please them, so we never let it affect us.

Rick: And you mentioned that it's obviously it's hard work, like you're –

Don Strapzy: [00:13:20] Yeah.

Rick: – working at this –

Don Strapzy: [00:13:21] Yeah.

Rick: – 24/7 –

Don Strapzy: [00:13:22] Definitely, yeah.

Rick: – to get the content out –

Don Strapzy: [00:13:23] Yeah.

Rick: – and get the merch out, and organise the teams, and all that stuff. Has there ever been a point where you've thought oh, I could do with taking a step back here?

Don Strapzy: [00:13:33] Yeah and no, because I love what I'm doing and I'm fortunate enough to be in this position 'cause I know what it's like when there wasn't nothing really to do, so – and yeah, sometimes, because it's like oh damn, there's a lot to do, I've got a lot of editing to do, like this whole weekend I'm indoors and I was sitting in front of the camera. But it's never a thing of I don't want to do this, it's more a thing of I need to expand the team, I need some help boys, you know what I mean? [00:13:54] And that's where we're at right now with Chris and George. It's like three of us, so just to ease the workload a bit. But, yeah, I just take it on. I take it all on as a part of the game and I accept it.

Rick: You mentioned people see you guys out and about in Lewisham.

Don Strapzy: [00:14:10] Yeah.

Rick: Do you feel that in the community? Do you feel the impact is having?

Don Strapzy: [00:14:13] Yeah, definitely, 100 percent, we're out and about and they're



coming up to us showing love, and there's love everywhere. And because we are, we're from – this is the community we're from. We're not one of them people that oh we can't go here, we can't – we've been here, we've been out here doing this, do you know what I mean? So, I think it's a very positive light in the community that we're from.

Rick: Would you take a player from somewhere else?

Don Strapzy: [00:14:32] From Peckham?

Rick: Mm.

Don Strapzy: [00:14:33] So that's a funny one, because we took their main player, young [Madby], and we got grief for it when we took him, like boys in our team weren't happy about it. But it's deeper than that, it's football, do you know what I mean? And the message, what we're doing, is bigger than that. So, we took him, and it didn't go to well for him. We sent him back, sent him back to Peckham. And we played them the other day, and we started, you know, singing about him and stuff.

[00:14:55] But it's funny because you get certain people that are kind of old-school like are we taking – are we – because he plays for our reserve team and he plays for Peckham, so there was some people that were saying ah yeah, you've got to pick a side. But, again, the fact that we can talk about it and laugh about it is massive for our community –

Rick: Yeah.

Don Strapzy: – because Lewisham and Peckham, Brixton, these areas, there's a lot of gangs in them areas, especially when I was growing up. Being from Lewisham and being from Peckham, that was two complete different sides. [00:15:21] So, the fact that we're now in our late twenties, early thirties, and we're able to say oh, we never lose to Peckham, and there's no backlash, shows how far the community has come. And it's uniting people, because even when we played Brixton, it went off, do you know what I mean? Pushing and shoving on the side-line. After the game we're shaking hands, and they love what we're doing. And the community is coming stronger. We're friends with Peckham. [00:15:45] Do you know, on the pitch we're not, but off the pitch it's love, do you know what I mean? So, for our community and what's being going on in our community over these years it's massive. I think it's a major influence and an impact, because there's people in our team that have been involved in these situations, and people know them because of that, and we're able to bring



something positive to the area.

Rick: Do you think you're going to see other teams try and emulate what you're doing?

Don Strapzy: [00:16:09] Yeah, there is, there's a few teams that are filming their games, and hopefully they get big and it helps them as well because I know how it changes people's lives. But the characters we've got, you just can't – you can't find another Big G, you can't find another [Drops], Big Doug, me on commentary, do you know what I mean? So, it's – I think we're just blessed with the diversity of our changing room.

Rick: It's a good blend isn't it?

Don Strapzy: [00:16:29] It's a good blend, man, and like I said, it's people from – it's not just a black team or just a white team, it's a mixture, do you know what I mean? And everyone is comfortable together, and from all different types, like Jazz, blonde hair, loves to skate, skater boy, do you know what I mean? And you've got Drops like a street boy that – and you put them all together and it's just – it's magic, do you know what I mean? [00:16:44] So, I think that's why it's done so well, everyone can find someone that they relate to, do you know what I mean? And I think that's what it is.

[00:16:50 - 00:16:52 - Background music]

Rick: Hello there, just quickly, Who Says You Can't? is brought to you by EE. No other network gives you 5G in more places so you can access the content you love, instantly, in jaw-dropping quality. And speaking of content you love, back to the podcast.

Something I really like is that there seems, from looking in your phone, some of your fans are Premier League players –

Don Strapzy: [00:17:14] Yeah. Yeah –

Rick: – as opposed to –

Don Strapzy: – it's crazy, isn't it?

Rick: So, we've got – hang on, let's have a look here. We've got DMs from Declan Rice.

Don Strapzy: [00:17:23] Mm.



Rick: He absolutely loves it. I mean he –

Don Strapzy: [00:17:25] Yeah.

Rick: – just slid in.

Don Strapzy: [00:17:26] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, [unintelligible 00:17:27]. Yeah, yeah.

Rick: He's on it. Watching the latest Dons video –

Don Strapzy: [00:17:30] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rick: – killing it.

Don Strapzy: [00:17:32] Oh he loves it, man. He loves it.

Rick: Yeah, I've seen him rapping along to your stuff.

Don Strapzy: [00:17:34] Yeah, rapping to the stuff, and he's being authentic with it. And I think we've treated him with respect as well, like I don't ask him for favours or anything, it's just genuine love. He's told me as soon as he hangs up his boots, he's in, do you know what I mean?

Rick: I was going to say –

Don Strapzy: [00:17:45] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rick: – you've got to try get him in.

Don Strapzy: [00:17:46] No, a million percent, because we was going to bring him to a fives game, but it's just poli- – it's a bit political for him. I had to tell him. Because he wanted to come play fives, I was saying Decs, I can't be responsible, if someone touches you and you get injured, do you know what I mean, I don't want to be held responsible for this. But he's always hitting me up on what's the score, what's the score, mate, how did it go.
[00:18:02] When he scored against Arsenal, I think, at that West Ham ground he FaceTimed me. He's like oh, I'm buzzing, mate, I'm buzzing, who have you got tomorrow. And I'm thinking Dec, you just badded against Arsenal, don't worry about us, we're playing in a park somewhere, do you know what I mean?
[00:18:15] But he came to the Cup Final.



Rick: Oh, he came down?

Don Strapzy: [00:18:16] Yeah, that was good of him.

Rick: Oh, that's great.

Don Strapzy: [00:18:17] It was lovely. He didn't come with no security or nothing, he mingled in with the supporters, came in our dressing room. So, yeah, man, he shows a lot of love, Declan.

Rick: And you've got, I think, Iwobi think I saw –

Don Strapzy: [unintelligible 00:18:28].

Rick: – he messaged you as well. Are these guys just – they're just finding you?

Don Strapzy: [00:18:31] Yeah.

Rick: They're just talking about you?

Don Strapzy: [00:18:33] Yeah, I mean it's weird because a lot of them they listen to my music as well, or they used to listen to my music back in the day, so it's weird when that happens, because especially with Awobe, he's always like oh, I used to listen to you back in the day. And he put me in his team with – like his little celebrity team. They've got [Demari] Grey. So, it works, because, like I said, a lot of my freestyle, a lot of my music was football punchlines and metaphors, and I always used to drop footballers' names, so they've all taken to it. But, yeah, [00:18:56] it's all just been authentic. They've just come in on an authentic one. It's not like I've sent them a clip. I don't know, I just don't know what it is, but I think it's football, isn't it, at the end of the day, and I think people can relate to it. And with my music they probably knew about me already, and then they [00:19:10] just kind of reach out and show love.

Rick: An interesting crossover, isn't there, I think, between like the music world and football –

Don Strapzy: [00:19:18] Yeah.

Rick: – particularly like rap and grime and stuff.



Don Strapzy: [00:19:20] Mm.

Rick: I don't quite know where it comes from –

Don Strapzy: [00:19:24] Yeah.

Rick: – but, you know, I've seen – is it Danny Welbeck with – with – hang on –

Don Strapzy: [00:19:28] [Lingard]. Yeah, Lingard. Yeah, yeah.

Rick: – I've got it now. Yeah, yeah. And they're rapping away.

Don Strapzy: [00:19:32] Yeah.

Rick: Where's that overlap coming from do you think? Is it just the younger players are just into that stuff?

Don Strapzy: [00:19:37] Possibly. I think it's the entertainment business, isn't it, like football, music, it's entertainment, they're always – it's like cousins. At the same time as well, maybe the genre of music is – they like it. I think with social media nowadays it just allows people to reach out and share what you're doing.

Rick: Nice to see as well Stormsy on his Insta.

Don Strapzy: [00:19:56] Mm

Rick: Looking genuinely absolutely thrilled to meet you.

Don Strapzy: [00:20:00] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rick: And Big G I think is it?

Don Strapzy: [00:20:01] And Big G, yeah, yeah, a big character Big G, he's the Captain.

Rick: Yeah.

Don Strapzy: [00:20:05] He's a Skipper, yeah.

Rick: And Keeper, and he's a big old unit, isn't he?



- Don Strapzy: [00:20:08] Big goalkeeper, yeah, and he's vocal, and he's physical, like people love him. Like they either hate him or love him, but the kids love him.
- Rick: Yeah.
- Don Strapzy: [00:20:15] He's a great [unintelligible 00:20:15].
- Rick: Of course, he feels iconic.
- Don Strapzy: [00:20:17] Yeah, that's what I mean, he's like a big character that comes out. He does this mad thing at the end of the game where he slaps someone on the chest. But, yeah, again, Stormzy showed love, calling us pioneers, do you know what I mean? And – but he came out to a game, because his mates were playing for the other team.
- Rick: Right.
- Don Strapzy: [00:20:30] He just showed us nothing but respect. People was looking at us like we were some celebrities because he's like ah, ah, got his camera out, was like oh Donny, do you know what I mean? That's like Stormzy, you know what I mean? So, humble of him. Again, a lot of these guys as well they're just humble, and it's love, and I think it's genuine and it's real, it's just – that's what it is, do you know what I mean?
- Rick: And you're obviously had a lot of success, there's loads of trophy pics and stuff –
- Don Strapzy: [00:20:50] Yeah.
- Rick: – on here, and on that, to you now, what does success look like? Is it more important that you win games or that you grow like the Dons brand?
- Don Strapzy: [00:21:02] Yeah. You can't hide the fact that winning on the pitch is so important, it's really important because kids like winners, do you know what I mean? And we're also – a whole point of our mind-frame and what we're sharing with people is that we want to be the best, and we want more, and we want success. So, winning is a major part of that, I can't deny that, like we don't go out there and think about [00:21:23] well, you know, we've got 3,000 people here, you know, well done boys. No, we want to win a game of football, so winning is key.
But also, of course, like you said, growing the brand as well, that's massive, being able to influence people and just be a good inspiration, but winning is



very important, 1000 percent.

Rick: I like this photo of you. I think you're in the post office, bagging up.

Don Strapzy: [00:21:43] Yeah.

Rick: I assume you're bagging up merch.

Don Strapzy: [00:21:45] Yeah, me and Big G, because we live together. We was up, bagging up this merch till like 4am in the morning, having to get up early because we used to coach in a school, so it was long hours, man. But we was literally – we was making trips to the post office with 60, 70 parcels, it was crazy. So, yeah, that's old times, but, again, it just represents the growth. That's when we started realising oh this is nuts, people are buying what we're doing, like ...

Rick: What's the best seller at the moment?

Don Strapzy: [00:22:11] The hats. The hats always go. The black on black, the [Owen] hat. And also, we've got Longest Night hoodies which go. But I think the hats and the hoodies they go the most.

Rick: Mm. So, you and Big G live together.

Don Strapzy: [00:22:22] Mm. Yeah.

Rick: Do you have day jobs? Have you got time?

Don Strapzy: [00:22:25] No, we do this full time.

Rick: Yeah?

Don Strapzy: [00:22:27] It's all done as full time. We've got an office – built an office in our garden. So, literally every day it's editing and content creation. It's full time, man, it's like 24 hours, we don't stop. Back when that picture was taken, we was working in a school teaching PE, afterschool clubs, lunch clubs, and all that stuff, sports days and everything like that. But now it's just Dons 24/7.

Rick: It must have been quite a moment when you thought no, this is it, we're going to go full time on this?



- Don Strapzy: [00:22:55] Yeah. Yeah. It happened when I done my knee, when I injured my knee and I had to have surgery, it meant I was going to be out of school for about a month, two months, and at that time I was thinking oh I don't know what I'm going to do for money. But then it came at the right time because the Dons was taking up so much of my time, because editing was a long – it was a long process. There was opportunities coming, but having to go here and go there, and obviously wanting also to grow the channel back, can we get – [00:23:20] because we do five-a-side football as well as 11-a-side, and all these things we was doing, plus trying to do my music, plus trying to sell the merch, it was just getting out of hand.
[00:23:30] I was at that point where, like you said, it's like I need to take the jump, I need to just risk it and say to myself, you know what, let me just go fulltime for 12 months and see where I'm at in 12 months. If it don't work, I'll go back to the school, do you know what I mean? I had to make that jump. It was around December and I had to have my surgery on my knee, which meant I was – like I said, I was gonna be [00:23:47] out of school for about six weeks, but I just never – I just never went back. I done it and I said no, this is it, I'm going to go for it.
[00:23:53] So, I'm very grateful, man, but it's been hard work and it is hard work, like there's no secrets, it's just I'm fortunate enough to enjoy what I do, if that makes sense, do you know what I mean? So, it's been nonstop since then, literally.
- Rick: And in terms of like your original thought, so in 2017 when you were like okay, I'm going to start filming this stuff because I want my – you know, the fans of my music to connect with me a bit more.
- Don Strapzy: [00:24:14] Yeah. Mm.
- Rick: Working?
- Don Strapzy: [00:24:16] Yeah, definitely, one million percent. One million percent. That my followers have just grown up, grown completely, and I think it's just because we're just – you're seeing me for me, I'm just being honest with people, being real, banter, being silly. Like it's [00:24:29] just not always about being like a bad boy or a gangster all the time, do you know what I mean?
- Rick: No, I was going to say –
- Don Strapzy: [00:24:34] Yeah.
Rick: – the main thing is –



Don Strapzy: [00:24:34] Yeah.

Rick: – it's just funny.

Don Strapzy: [00:24:35] It's just it's funny, yeah.

Rick: Like it's good fun, and it's funny.

Don Strapzy: [00:24:36] Yeah, it's funny, man, and I think people relate to it, and it's definitely helped, and obviously I'm interacting because I'm on the channel every week. Once a week I'm on there interacting with supporters, supporters come to games, meeting them face-to-face. So, it's definitely helped.

Rick: If you could have any pro footballer guest on a track with you who'd you go for?

Don Strapzy: [00:24:55] It's a good one. Maybe

Rick: You know that Declan Rice would be up for it?

Don Strapzy: [00:24:59] Yeah.

Rick: But I'm not saying you necessarily want him.

Don Strapzy: [00:24:59] Yeah, I'd probably pull in Declan because he plays in the same position as me as well.

Rick: Oh, that's nice.

Don Strapzy: [00:25:06] Yeah, and he's English and Irish like myself, so I reckon – I reckon I'll pull in Declan. But if I had to add someone else in here, probably like a [Ronaldino] or one of them old-school –

Rick: Oh yeah?

Don Strapzy: – Brazilians, do you know what I mean?

Rick: Yeah, yeah, lovely.

Don Strapzy: [00:25:16] Yeah, yeah, someone like that, yeah, bring some sort of samba to



it –

Rick: Yeah.

Don Strapzy: – so, yeah.

Rick: And then film the video out in Brazil.

Don Strapzy: [00:25:22] Film the video in Brazil, yeah, Rio.

Rick: That's great.

Don Strapzy: [00:25:25] Yeah.

Rick: There's a hashtag that I've seen pop up on a lot of the Dons accounts, #anythingforpaula.

Don Strapzy: [00:25:31] Yeah.

Rick: Tell me about that.

Don Strapzy: [00:25:32] We always had like a slogan, anything. We've got Longest 90, and we've got one called Anything. And Anything came when we was winning 1-0 against a team, a really good team, and we weren't even that good back then, but we just had heart and passion. Me and Big G was playing in the middle, George was a goalkeeper, we was [00:25:48] playing centre midfield at the time. Like we called it a no entry zone, you just wouldn't – if you go past me you ain't getting past him. So, it was just heart and passion, win your tackles, win your headers, keep going for 90 minutes. [00:25:58] And it was 1-0 up, and there was like 10 minutes to go, and they just couldn't – like we had – we was clearing it off the line, everything, and Big G just starting anything for the Dons, anything. And all the supporters started saying 'anything.' So, that's where anything came from. And then in March 2017 unfortunately my mum passed away, and it kind of transitioned into Anything for Paula, because we then went and won a Cup Final two weeks later, and like in there we were just saying look, anything, anything for the Dons, anything for Paula, and it's just [00:26:25] lived on since then. So, it represents a lot of things, obviously my mum because she was the kit lady, she washed the kit, came to every game, she was a big part of my life, like a major part of my life. And she – all of my friends knew her, she bought up everyone. We say Anything for Paula, but it represents everyone that's lost a parent, do you know what I mean? Big G's lost both



parents, Malachi's [00:26:44] lost his parents, Doug's – do you know what I mean? There's a lot of boys in the team that are missing parents. So, when we say Anything for Paula it's not just anything for my mum, it's anything for all our mothers, do you know what I mean, that we've lost someone. So, that's what Anything for Paula is.

Rick: So, did she get to see the Dons' success on YouTube or not quite?

Don Strapzy: [00:27:04] Yeah, she got – I'm happy – that's what I'm grateful for, because she got to see me transition my lifestyle, and she – she passed away a few weeks before our first Cup Final, so she didn't get to see the amount of people that came out. Our first Cup Final back in April 2017, about 800 people came which was huge.

Rick: Wow.

Don Strapzy: [00:27:21] It still is huge.

Rick: Yeah.

Don Strapzy: [00:27:22] Obviously compared to the other ones it wasn't as big, but she was at the point where she started seeing like 50, 60 people at games and she was realising – and she always used to message me on my WhatsApp like oh you've got 60,000 subscribers, do you know what I mean? So, she saw where it was going. But, yeah, so she did kind of see the growth.

Rick: Mm. There are some lyrics in your notes app –

Don Strapzy: [00:27:43] Yeah.

Rick: – that I saw. Are they about your mum?

Don Strapzy: [00:27:46] Yeah, yeah, I wrote a song for my mum. I wrote a couple. One called Sleep Peacefully, and there was another one, Anything for Paula. So, yeah, that was for my mum.

Rick: And do you write a lot on – just like when you're out and about on your phone?

Don Strapzy: [00:27:59] Yeah. Yeah, like I usually get a bit creative at night-time, I don't sleep much, so it's at night-time usually my mind sort of wakes up, I'll put a beat on and just write to it, get the notes up on my phone. Or I might think



of something, note it down, and that's kind of how I do it.

Rick: You're planning to do an EP this year, yeah?

Don Strapzy: [00:28:16] Yeah, yeah, so there will be an EP this year, and hopefully by October we can start touring.

Rick: And the big question, when are you going to be back playing?

Don Strapzy: [00:28:23] Oh man, I'm hoping the next three months. I'm hoping. If I just work hard and I stay consistent, I'm not going to rush it because I've been out for so long. But I hope that my body is able to play in the next three months. Whether I make that come back in three months I'm not sure yet.

Rick: They're going to miss you on the side lines as well.

Don Strapzy: [00:28:40] Yeah, I know, that's what people were telling me. So, I don't – I think I've bumped myself a bit. I think – I don't know if I'll be able to make a full – I'm sure I'll have to put myself on the bench, do you know what I mean, come on for the last 15, just like tackle their –

Rick: Yeah, a good bit of glory.

Don Strapzy: – tackle their skipper, come back off, do you know what I mean? But, yeah, but we have a reserve side as well who play games, midweeks, so – and we have a fives team. So, even if my minutes come there, fives and the XIs. We've got an XIs team that's called – like the original players that don't really get much game time anymore, so there'll be opportunities for me to play.

Rick: So, are these the original players that first started playing back in 2014?

Don Strapzy: [00:29:16] Yeah, yeah. Years ago.

Rick: And now you've got – you've got better players now.

Don Strapzy: [00:29:18] Yeah, we've got all the better players in there, yeah, yeah.

Rick: Yeah, [unintelligible 00:29:21].

Don Strapzy: [00:29:21] Yeah, exactly, so they're happy with the – like they played on Monday against Greenwich University, beat them 2-1 which is good, and they've got a game coming up Chelsea Development Team. Like they play a



lot of unis, Essex Uni, all that stuff. So, they've got game time, it keeps them quiet for now.

Rick: Yeah, yeah. For now.

Don Strapzy: [00:29:38] For now. Trust me. Yeah.

Rick: Okay, just to wrap things up we're going to do a sort of rapid fire mobile deep-dive.

Don Strapzy: [00:29:44] Yeah.

Rick: Ready?

Don Strapzy: [00:29:45] Let's do it.

Rick: Get your phone out. Here we go. What music app do you use first of all?

Don Strapzy: [00:29:50] Spotify.

Rick: Okay. So, what was your most listened to track on Spotify in 2019? What'd you think it will be?

Don Strapzy: [00:29:59] I don't know. I listen to so much music. I can't predict it. I'm assuming it might be Taurus – a song called – from Taurus Riley called She's Royal. That's what I think. So, people, check it out.

Rick: Yeah, it's interesting, I always feel like with these things I know what I want it to be, and it turns out –

Don Strapzy: [00:30:17] Yeah, something else, isn't it?

Rick: – that I've been listening to the Frozen soundtrack.

Don Strapzy: [00:30:18] Yeah, I've probably saved myself there, but I don't know, yeah. Beauty and the Beast or something. Mm.

Rick: Yeah, a good soundtrack to be fair.

Don Strapzy: [00:30:26] Yeah.

Rick: What was the last DM you sent?



Don Strapzy: [00:30:29] Oh gosh. On Instagram or Twitter or ...?

Rick: Your choice?

Don Strapzy: [00:30:35] We'll do Instagram. Last DM I sent. Mm, I'm not sure I want to say – do you want to stay that one? Poet. I'll just go a poet, oh, so you're just living life, bro. I messaged him on the 19th of October –

Rick: Yeah.

Don Strapzy: – and he replied to me yesterday at 1:22am. And he said oh bro, I've just seen this. I said you're just living life, bro. That's it.

Rick: Yeah, I mean that's – you know.

Don Strapzy: [00:30:58] It's not bad. It's not bad though.

Rick: He needs to work on that.

Don Strapzy: [00:31:00] Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Rick: What was your last Deliveroo order or food order?

Don Strapzy: [00:31:05] Oh, yesterday, I got an Indian.

Rick: Yeah? Good?

Don Strapzy: [00:31:08] Yeah, yeah. Yeah, it was nice, yeah. Chicken biryani.

Rick: Always the same one?

Don Strapzy: [00:31:11] Always the same, no vegetable curry.

Rick: Yeah?

Don Strapzy: [00:31:14] Yeah, man.

Rick: Last YouTube channel you subscribed to?

Don Strapzy: [00:31:20] Oh, I think it was some weird one. I watch some funny stuff on YouTube.



Rick: That's the thing with YouTube –

Don Strapzy: [00:31:25] Yeah.

Rick: – I mean you can – a) you can –

Don Strapzy: [00:31:27] Oh, it was this one.

Rick: – kill hours and hours.

Don Strapzy: [00:31:28] I think it was this one, Speaking Brazilian Language School.

Rick: Oh yeah, because you're going to Brazil in the Summer.

Don Strapzy: [00:31:32] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rick: And you're [unintelligible 00:31:34].

Don Strapzy: [00:31:35] Yeah, yeah, that's it.

Rick: That's amazing.

Don Strapzy: [00:31:36] Trying to pick up some Portuguese.

Rick: Yeah, I was going to say. Yeah.

Don Strapzy: [00:31:38] Yeah.

Rick: If you open your browser what was the last webpage you were looking at?

Don Strapzy: [00:31:44] Oh, look at that, Translate. Google Translate.

Rick: And Google Translate?

Don Strapzy: [00:31:48] Yeah, yeah.

Rick: And what were you looking up?

Don Strapzy: [00:31:50] Focado which means focused. Because someone messaged me.



Rick: Oh look, that's good.

Don Strapzy: [00:31:54] Yeah.

Rick: And what about your calendar? What's coming up? What's next for – well, for Dons, for SE Dons –

Don Strapzy: [00:32:02] SE Dons –

Rick: – and for Dons Stratford?

Don Strapzy: – SE Dons, Sunday, we've got a PCC round six of the Cup which will – if we win will put us through to the quarter finals.

Rick: Yeah? Confident?

Don Strapzy: [00:32:12] Yeah, man, going in confident. We're using the wider squad, so some of the original players are going to come and play which is good. Dons Strapzy an EP is on the way, I'll be in the studio Friday, we're just working on music consistently. It's just busy stuff, and, yeah, there will be a lot coming.

Rick: If there's like one message that you'd like people to take away from your story, your journey with SE Dons what would it be?

Don Strapzy: [00:32:37] Mm. No, believe in yourself. Treat people the way you'd like to be treated, and be honest with yourself. And I think that's about it, man. Believe in your dreams and chase your dreams. Even your closest people might doubt you, half of the time that's because they care for you, but you've got to be tough and just believe in yourself, and we only live once. Work hard, and that's about it, you know. Learn Portuguese.

Rick: Learn Portuguese.

Don Strapzy: [00:33:01] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rick: Get the merch out.

Don Strapzy: [00:33:04] Get the merch out, yeah, exactly, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rick: Don Strapzy, thanks so much for joining us.



Don Strapzy: [00:33:08] Thank you very much.

Rick: Good luck to you –

Don Strapzy: [00:33:08] I appreciate it, brother. Yeah.

Rick: – and to SE Dons for the rest of the season.

Don Strapzy: [00:33:12] Thank you very much, man, I appreciate it, bro.

Rick: No problem. Thank you, man.

Don Strapzy: [00:33:13] Love.

Rick: Cheers.