It's the 25th of August 2000 and the Rev Al Green is sitting in on another Mrtin O'Neill press conference.

First up on the agenda for MON was his reaction to the EUFA draw (HJK Helsinki, first leg at home). MON admitted that he knew nothing about the

Finns, and was simply pleased that we were in the draw. He'll find more

about them prior to the tie.

In terms of injury news, he said that Petta had pulled up with cramp, but had simultaneously gone over on his ankle. Unfortunately no-one pressed him

to find out if he would definitely be fit for Sunday, although that is the

impression.

Stubbs and Johnson both trained today and the medical team will wait to see of there is any reaction before it'll be known if either will be ready for

the game.

As for Burchill, his quick-fire hat-trick has not changed MON's thinking, but he does hope that "Burchie" will think again. MON joked that Burchill's

value had gone up to £27m.

MON was also asked if he would be changing his game plan on Sunday. He replied that he had no plans to alter anything, unless changes had to be

made during the course of the match. He emphasised again that Rangers are

"very strong".

He also revealed that this would be his first ever "live" OF game - he's only previously seen them on TV.

And with that he was off to face the daily paper hacks and in came Mad Stephane (although he said later that people should not call him "mad".

Oops.). He also said that the players are "very 'appy" and there is a "good

atmosphere between the players" and also a "good fighting spirit".

David "The Spanner" Tanner bizarrely asked Mahe for his opinion on Patrick Viera's situation (I assume wee David made the connection that both are

French and get sent off at the drop of a hat?). "Ees not my problem,"

replied Mahe, "I 'ave to control myself."

Stephane Mahe? Self-control? To quote Harry Hill, "What are the chances of that happening?"

David "The Spanner" Tanner may not be the sharpest tool in the box, but (despite his diminutive stature) he is the biggest.

I'm told that he made an erse of himself on Wednesday (pre-Jeunesse pc), when he asked MON if there was any signing news. MON responded by saying

that he knew Spanner was going to ask that "because you always do", before

adding "You always ask the best questions." It seems that Spanner's

colleagues were pissing themselves and wee David was reduced to silence.

Today, the wee dark-haired woman from the Beeb (Rhona?) asked MON about the importance of a victory on Sunday [hardly splitting-the-atom questioning as

usual today] and O'Neill gave an expansive answer about all games being of

vital importance and that people would read into the result whatever they

wanted to. However, too many minutes had passed without Spanner getting a

word in, so when O'Neill paused for a breath he couldn't resist jumping in.

He was cut short, though, by MON saying "Oh, don't let me finish a sentence, then." Cue furiously-blushing Spanner. And things went downhill from

there...

Spanner : Have you spotted any weaknesses in the rangers team which Chris Sutton can exploit?
MON : From the question I assume you have.
Spanner : Er..

Funnier still was his "questioning" of Stephane Mahe, who filed in after MON as part of Martin's rota system. There were a lot of standard questions (how

does this game differ from others?) and a lot of standard replies (I try to

geeve 100 percent. That ees what Marteen wants.). Unfortunately, The

Spanner-Man tried to get too complicated...

Spanner : This is a new defence..eh..you have new defensive partners. How do you think it will

cope?
Mahe [wearing what becomes a permanently puzzled expression - a very "French" puzzled expression, if you know what I mean] Eh?
Spanner : You have a new defence?
Mahe : I am a defender?

[At this point Spanner hand movements simply become more expansive]

Spanner : Erm, no. You have new defenders. Eh..Joos [which Spanner pronounces "Juice", btw] Valgaeren [which Spanner pronounces "Valharren"] is

new to the defence.
Mahe : Eh?

[Spanner furiously waves his hands, putting his fingers together in a steeple shape, then pulling them far apart]

Spanner : Juice Valharren.
Mahe : Eh?

[Spanner makes faster and even more exaggerated hand gestures, and now opts for the standard "Brit Abroad" technique - he talks louder]

Spanner : JUICE VALHARREN!!!
Mahe : Eh?

Thankfully, Celtic's PR girl leans towards Stephane and says "Yoss Valgaeren". Suddenly Mahe's face lights up with understanding..

Mahe: Ah...ValGARren. Yes, what about him.

Other than Spanner and Mahe, everyone the room is rolling about with tears in their eyes, so the pc broke up at that point. As Mahe walked past

Spanner, he said "You are a comedian, yes?".

More of a stand-up straight-man, I'd have said.