When the cast for Star Wars: The Force Awakens was announced last year, the internet went MAD as director JJ Abrams revealed the cast relatively unknown Brit John Boyega, 23, as lead character Finn. But impending global fame hasn’t gone to John’s head—he still lives with his mum and dad in south London, and when heat travels to Spain to chat to him for The Duel by Pokerstars (a televised poker tournament where John plays footballer Neymar Jnr, launching in December), he’s the most chilled-out celeb we’ve met, chatting about his workout schedule, how he’s getting “a lot of love from the lads”, and how he went to a Star Wars convention in disguise.

How did you manage to keep it all secret? Oh yes, it was so hard not to tell all my friends and family. My parents were saying, “Why are you happy?” And I would say, “I’m fine.” But then I got to tell them that it’s me and a guy called Harrison Ford. They were absolutely ecstatic.

How long was it before you could tell your parents? It was a few weeks, so it wasn’t a habit of time. It was tough. I was leaving the house to go to fittings and rehearsals [for Star Wars] and my mum and dad were asking, “Where are you going?” I’d go, “Oh, I’m filming.” And they said, “You’re only in two or three episodes?” Well, [I told them], it’s big episodes. But after about three weeks I told them.

You’re going to get so many fan letters when it comes out… I’m getting some already and they’re so sweet. I do sign them. I mean, my dad has to force me a bit, because it’s so much paper. But I really appreciate it.

Have you met any fans yet? We went to California to do a Star Wars celebration, and I decided I wanted to go to the floor where they sell merchandise. Thousands of fans were there, and security told me, “You can’t go to the floor, you’re in Star Wars.” So I go, “OK, give me a Stormtrooper helmet and I’m gonna go out.” So they give me a helmet and no one notices.

Can you go out in Peckham without getting mobbed? Absolutely. If you’re in a Star Wars movie, and still wanna go around Peckham, get yourself a Vauxhall Corsa – no one notices you. Don’t carry a lightsaber, don’t squint your eyes or do the handsome face. But think about it like this – you’ve got a Peckham native in Star Wars.

“I got the Star Wars part in a Peckham caff”