

## TROUBLEMAKER, The Mahmoud El-Hessney Story

The first thing you need to know about me is that I'm cheeky. My parents first learned this when I was seven. We were going to get our photos done for our passports so we could travel to Lebanon, where my parents are from. My mother and my older brother went first. The photographer told them to look serious so they did. Then it was my turn. I smiled my best smile. The man told me to stop. I smiled wider and brighter. He got very angry. My parents were laughing. My brothers and sisters were laughing. We were asked to leave and told not to come back until they could control me.

Eventually, I cooled down and we took the photo. But from that day, my parents knew they had a wild one on their hands.

Years later, my fire only burned brighter and more dangerously. Trouble followed me wherever I went. That is to say, I went looking for it at every opportunity.

One day, when I was thirteen, my friend Badr, his cousin and I, caught the train to our other friend, Mahmoud's house. He lived far away. He had pool tables, a hockey table, Playstation and a massive TV. We were in heaven. We played and played but eventually we got bored. I won't say whose idea it was, but someone suggested that we go 'knick-knocking'.

Onto our scooters we hopped. We went from house to house, knocking on doors and scooting away as fast as we could, but no one answered. No one chased us. We were really disappointed. We went home and tried to play some more but it wasn't fun.

We'd run out of chocolate and energy drink, so we walked down to the Sev. On the way back, Badr saw a house with big trucks out the front and angry dogs round the side. He dared me, 'Knick-knock that one!'

I took the bait.

I crept up to the door. The dogs were snarling. From where I stood, it looked like it was the car that was growling.

I reached up and hit the knocker and ran.

I didn't stop til I got to the other side of the road. Badr and Mahmoud were laughing at the look on my face. No one had answered. It was another dud. We walked off down the street.

Around the corner, we heard a big engine roar at us. The big red 4WD from the house I'd knick-knocked pulled up. An angry looking bogan leaned out of the window and said, 'Are youse the ones that knocked on my door?'

We didn't need to answer. He knew it was us. We ran.

The car chased us down the street. I've never runs so fast or so hard or so far in my life. Though it was probably only a hundred metres. Finally, we were puffed out and stopped. The car pulled up angrily beside us and the ogre got out.

'Oi! Leave em alone!'

The voice came from behind us. It was another bogan. But this one seemed nice.

'What's it to you?' our menace asked him.

'They're on my lawn!' our new friend answered. 'And you're pickin on kids, mate. They're kids. Try pickin on someone your own size.'

The bad bogan didn't want to take on this stronger, kinder one and he got back into his car, muttering about kids these days.

We thanked they guy and didn't mention that we'd knick-knocked him earlier though he probably knew that already.