

How this story came about:

I was talking to Zac one day about doing a story on the Paydirt Eatery. The conversation got round to controversy and human interest.

When I mentioned to Zac that I really liked the Martin Royds 'whizzer' story in BWD #2 he replied, "Oh boy, have I got a whizzer story for you."

And here it is ...

# Nevzat Kadri

talks to Paul Cockram

ON THAT DAY IN 1974 I was dressed up in a suit, complete with lots of gold, feathery ornaments and a cape. It was a solo performance, I was the only one. I was paraded through the village on the back of a donkey and leading the procession was a band with drums and trumpets — the lot.

The parade did a circuit of the village for about an hour and then we ended up back at our house. The whole village knew what was about to happen. In those days all boys went through it at about the age of six. It's a religious practice and part of Turkish culture.

So we come back to the house, a roomful of people with cameras and a doctor in a white coat. I was petrified but at the same time excited I guess. There were promises of gifts and new outfits and everyone's there around you; but at the same time you realise that you're about to have part of your penis cut off.

Yes it was quite scary. I get there, I take the suit off and they dress me in a white smock. A first cousin, a really big bloke, was elected to hold me down while it all happened. It wasn't done on a bed, just in one corner of the room with everyone standing around waiting, watching and taking photographs.

So there I am being held and waiting with my willy hanging out while the doctor gets out the strop and sharpens his cut-throat razor. The only anaes-



ZAC IN HIS GARDEN BEHIND THE ALBION AND (BELOW) WAITING IN THE REFUGEE CAMP WITH OLDER BROTHER ..... FOR A NEW LIFE IN AUSTRALIA.

thetic on offer was a piece of Turkish Delight. It was supposed to distract you from what was about to happen but I told them, "I don't want any Turkish delight. I just want my mouth shut because I'm going to scream". There's a photo of me with someone's hand clamped firmly across my mouth. I don't have any memory of pain, but of course there must have been. My strongest memory is of not wanting to scream because you're not supposed to. So the whole thing is done ... shpoom-bang ... and I get bandaged, the hand over my mouth is removed and I say something like, "thank God that's over — I'm never doing this again". And of course the whole room cracked up laughing.

And then the healing — it really hurts, trouble weeing, like a sprinkler of course and really painful.

To make matters worse, within a week Turkey invaded Cyprus and I remember being really terrified hearing the bombs going off in the distance. From

which ever direction I heard the noise I'd run to the other side of the house. Of course this doesn't offer any protection but I ran around anyway, all over the house weeing in fright as I went.



OUCH!



BEFORE, DURING & AFTER

My mother had to run around after me with a mop.

Not long after all this happened we made our way to a refugee camp for a few months and then, because we already had our papers for Australia, we were flown out here. To this day I can't go camping. Tents and squatting over holes in the ground — no, that's not for me ever again.

I was born in Cyprus and moved out here when I was seven. Dad and my two sisters were already in Australia working to save money to get the rest of the family out. We were part of the migration program that started in the 50s. There are nine of us in the family and dad and my two sisters had come here in 1972 or 1973. We lived in a village in Cyprus called Pafos.

It was quite difficult for me as a boy coming to Australia because obviously I was a 'wog' and couldn't speak English. At times it was a bit of a struggle but I liked being here and I always wanted to make something [work].

My parents and some of my older siblings still see themselves as Turks who once lived in Cyprus and now live in Australia but I knew from very early on that I was Australian. That was a big struggle for my family to watch I guess. In their eyes they were losing their kid.

Like a lot of migrant families, my parents are still living in the 1960s of the country they left. It's scary for them both here and when they return to modern Cyprus or Turkey.

So yes, I was the wog boy with the wog name. People would ask me my name and I'd say 'Nevzat' and I got sick of spelling it and pronouncing it and spelling it again so when I was 17 I called myself Zac.

I'm proud of my Turkish heritage but when I went back there the people were quite certain that I was no longer Turkish. After a bit of soul searching and sob-sob with my family I just had

to tell them they're not losing me to the dark side, it's just that I'm a f\*cking Aussie now.

My heritage influences my tastes in cuisine to a certain extent, but mainly, it's the foods with the flavours I love. When I started eating out in Sydney in the eighties, discovering Vietnamese and Thai, I just instantly loved the whole aspect of south-east asian food.

It was only after I embraced who I was as an Australian that I started to appreciate, even miss, Turkish cuisine — as an observer rather than being it.

Some of the dumplings I make, the fetta cheese, the halumi cheese, the mince lamb with paprika and pickled radish, all this is nostalgic — snippets influenced by home-cooked dinners at my sister's house.

As far as my garden goes, I like being close to the earth. I can get in there and just be with whatever's happening right there without taking in too much baggage. It's about what turns up and the food aspect of it I love even though

I don't have as much time now that I'm running a restaurant.

I haven't been able to give the garden as much attention lately and with the late frost I lost so many things. Now it's a bit more of an ornamental garden and I've put in more fruit trees.

For me it's an escape — not for isolation — I felt more isolated in the city than I do in Braidwood but I can go into my garden and get lost. I can switch off with nothing around but the birds chirping, seeds shooting and new life starting. And I like getting my hands in the dirt.

(Then if I want, in two seconds I can get a good coffee.)

The closer I get to the ground the more I enjoy interacting with it. Then I can grow it, cook it, feed it to people and enjoy their appreciation.

That's a part of my heritage that has remained strong — the Middle Eastern and Mediterranean focus on hospitality and the pleasure in feeding others.

IN THE PAYDIRT EATERY WITH LIZZIE.

