



AHMED TALAAT

THE MAN *WITH THE* JOKER TATTOO

By Menna Loutfy

HE'S A RENOWNED 36 YEAR-OLD EGYPTIAN INTERNATIONAL COURSE DESIGNER WHO RECENTLY APPEARED ON SCREEN AS A MONK IN THE EGYPTIAN TV SERIES "ZODIAC" WITH A TALENT IN ACTING ALONGSIDE HIS DAY JOB AS AN ARCHITECT. WHAT A COMBINATION !

IN AN HT EXCLUSIVE, AHMED TALAAT TELLS US WHAT MAKES HIM TICK.

TO START WITH: COURSE DESIGNING?!

“When I was younger I did not play video games like most of the guys my age! I used to design courses. I call it my treasure, I have a huge number of courses I designed in arenas that I’ve never seen or been to. I used to download them from the internet and design a speed class, two rounds, more and more. I didn’t even feel the hours passing while I did that because that was what I really enjoyed doing and I was really passionate about.”

Talaat started riding at a young age and was coached by **Sherif El-Demerdash** to whom he feels very grateful.

“I knew that I was not very fit to ride in top sport but I always loved to help with building the course. One day I was on a trip with General Ahmed El-Sawaf and that day he told me to either lose weight or stop riding; then he asked, why don’t you become a course designer? “

The question triggered that passion in Talaat’s heart and mind. They sat together and General Ahmed told him more about course designing then he contacted Egyptian course designer **General Atef El-Attar** who took it from there. But something unexpected happened on his first day as an assistant course designer in **EI-Basateen** during the National Championships.

“On my very first day as I entered the arena very eager to start my new path, Dr. Atef said to me, ‘Are you coming to work with these shorts?! Leave the arena now!’ I did not see that coming but I left. I went home, changed, and returned back.”

“At that time and that exact place in EI-Basateen, Egypt. That was the right way to look and I learnt to respect that.”

Then a great opportunity appeared when the Egyptian Equestrian Federation cooperated with international course designer **Rob Jansen** to design courses in the national shows for a full season. Talaat thought it would be great to learn from him and so he did. He contacted the Federation which agreed to help and he assisted Rob all season.

Later Rob asked him to assist him in international shows where his experience expanded. From Rob to **Olaf Petersen** who is also a big name in course designing, Talaat worked with them for a year and a half in and out of Egypt.

*“My god father in course designing was **Werner Deeg**; he truly affected my career. A few years back when I was working in Sunshine Tour with him, he called me and said you will design the six bars*



Talaat with Karim Badaro and Aly El-Sharif



Mohamed Hefzy, Tarek Nadim and Talaat

competition!”

Talaat felt very excited about that because the level of riders in the six bars competition is almost the same as the Grand Prix.

“That day as I walked into the VIP Lounge with Warner, someone asked him about me and said, “How’s your assistant, the Egyptian cowboy?” His answer caught me by surprise and I still remember his exact words that brought me sheer happiness and motivation.

He simply answered,

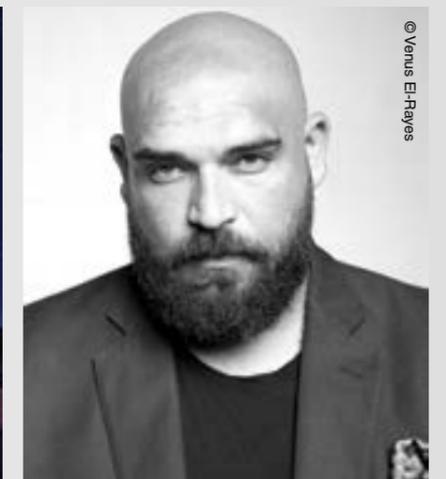
“He’s not my assistant anymore! He’s a colleague,” and continued, “ I promise you in 10 years from



Talaat and Egyptian celebrity actress Nelly Karim



Zodiac Series poster



© Venus El-Rayes

now when we’re both too old and we see him taking someone aside to talk about something; we will go listen because I know that he will probably say something new about the sport. Remember his name.”

STARRING ZODIAC SERIES

“I had the passion for acting since school. I used to act in school plays; then I enrolled in the Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University in 2003. I continued acting in University Theater but it was very difficult to do both in parallel so I had to drop acting.”

15 years later, during a chat between Talaat and his best friend Mohamed Hefzy _the award winning Egyptian screenwriter and renown producer who

recently became a member of the Academy Awards Board _ who’s also familiar with Talaat’s talent and passion advised him to get back to acting.

“Despite my hectic life between engineering, course designing and social responsibilities, I decided to give it a try because I was longing to feed that passion. I enrolled in an acting workshop that was a whole new level for me. I truly discovered the magic of acting!

*I’ve had so many jobs; acting is the most difficult one. The pleasure in it is that there’s no shame, you can go all the way with no shame, and it’s not you. But at the same time **it’s also you!** “*

AND YOU'RE STILL AN ENGINEER

"Yes, I am still working as an architect. It all started in 2008 when I worked with Dr. Tarek Nadim. He's my godfather and role model. I was lucky to have gotten all the work experience and even life experience through working with him and his family.

This man considers me as a son and he even encourages me to follow my acting passion. He's giving me time. "

HOW DO YOU SEE SUCCESS?

The secret of success lies in your willingness to succeed. How keen are you to achieve your dream? How much effort, time and energy are you willing to exert ?

Sometimes I spend 16 continuous hours of shooting and I do it with love; same applies to course designing and engineering.



It's all about **what you're willing to give** in order to succeed.

I usually don't feel like I am going to work because I am going to enjoy my time.

Simply when you reach that point; **I promise you will make it happen.**

WHY THE JOKER TATTOO?

"Do I really look like a guy with a plan? You know who I am? I am the dog chasing cars I wouldn't know what to do with one if I caught it! I just do things!"
"The Joker in Batman Returns"

"That's exactly every one of us. How many times do you fall in love with someone and you know that this is the wrong person but you just do it because you simply want to?. We all go through the experience and we know there's a big chance that it won't work out, but we just do it and we just live the moment and enjoy it without having to worry about what's lying ahead..."

*Every one of us is a joker with a **different motive.**"* 



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