

Pacharo Mzembe asked to explain “murder plot” — but he was simply rehearsing for Prize Fighter play

Amanda Horswill, Aminah Tejan, City North News, September 4, 2018

POLICE sternly knocking on a door is never a good sign, but Brisbane actor Pacharo Mzembe could take it as a compliment.

The talented actor opened his Spring Hill door last month to two very serious police officers, wanting to know why he'd been plotting a murder.

“Just had two detectives on the doorstep,” he posted on Facebook.

“They grilled me about a murder someone overheard I may have committed.

“I quoted lines from (the play) *Prize Fighter* and the confusion was sorted.

“I asked if it was the neighbours or a person in the street — as I am normally walking and learning lines with my script. They couldn't tell me.

“They said they had to investigate due to the climate of the world we live in.

“Wow, thanks (author and playwright Future D. Fidel), now I have to mumble your words in public.”

The “murder” Pacharo was rehearsing was for a national tour of the Helpmann award-nominated La Boite-Brisbane Festival production of *Prize Fighter*, which stops at Logan Entertainment Centre on September 13-14.

Prize Fighter tells the story of Congolese boy soldier Isa, now living in Brisbane, who is contesting a national boxing title.

He must fight his opponent in the ring and battle the demons in his head.

“It's such an emotional play ... about overcoming oppression and trauma,” Pacharo said.

“It's a great piece to share with an Australian audience because not only do they get to see an entertaining piece of theatre, the only white person in it is Margie Brown Ash. To me that's a beautiful thing because usually it's the other way around.

“It's so great to tell an African story that is still an Australian story.”

Pacharo plays Isa. Across from him in the ring is Pach's real-life brother Gideon, a professional NRL-player turned actor and life coach. On stage, the brothers' characters fight each other mercilessly. But off stage, they say they are the best of friends.

The pair fled with their family from the African country of Malawi, where their freedom fighter father's life was at risk.

“Pach and I are close because those you fight battle with become your closest comrades,” Gideon said.

Gideon, who also runs a life coaching business Zembition, said the physicality of the play meant he had never been in better shape — even compared to when he had contracts with Brisbane Broncos and Manly Sea Eagles.

“I am the fittest I have been in my entire life,” Gideon said.

PRIZE FIGHTER

WHERE: Logan Entertainment Centre, 170 Wembley Rd, Logan Central. WHEN: Sept 13-14, COST: \$35, Concession \$30