

happened about twenty years ago in Muscat. However, I don't know about you, but I always find it hard to say 'no' to friends, so I put my book down reluctantly, put my shoes on, got into my car, which I remember was a green Ford Mercury, and drove to Al Khuwair to pick up the teenagers. It was a Nokia 1011 and it was huge, as mobile phones, or GSMS as they were called in those days, were. Now, I was in the middle of a good book, and at that time I was quite far away from Al Khuwair, in Muttrah; so, to be honest, I was a bit annoyed. I'd bought the tape in the Sabco Centre in Qurum only a few days before this. His sister in the back didn't have a GSM, and I could see that she was very annoyed that her brother had one, but she didn't. I forget the name of the book, but it was by the British author George Orwell whose real name, by the way, was Eric Blair. Was it *The Road to Wigan Pier* I wonder? As I said, it was about 5 o'clock in the evening, and I was reading George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. I'd reached a really interesting part of the story, and I was concentrating really hard when the telephone rang. It weighed nearly half a kilo! It wasn't brilliant, but I'd bought it because I recognised the name of the producer of the record. Our home towns in the UK are quite close. With the music still playing, I drove to Al Khuwair to collect the teenagers. I suppose because he was older, Ali got into the front passenger seat and Aisha got into the back. I remember clearly that the song was called *Doomsday* by an American singer from Chicago named Evelyn Thomas. As I drove, and sang along to Evelyn Thomas, I heard quite a lot of noise in the 'I've got it! It was *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This is a superb book about the future. In those days, enjoyed answering the phone because I'd just got a mobile phone. His problem was that his teenage children – a boy of about 15 and a girl of around 13 wanted to go to a party that one of their school friends was having in Al Khuwair. In those days, people listened to music on cassette tapes, and I put a cassette tape on and started listening to some music. I won't use their real names, so let's call them Ali and Aisha. Ali, in the front seat, didn't talk either. He also had a GSM. It was a newer model than mine. It happened in the evening about 5 o'clock. I was at home reading a book. No, no, no... How can a book called *1984* be about the future? Well read it, or watch the movie, and find out! But, let me get back to my story. It was a friend of mine on the phone. He had to go to an important meeting, and he had a problem. I wanted to make an excuse and say 'no' to my friend. I'd met him when I was a teenager. I usually don't like to talk too much when I am driving, so I just asked them where the party was and drove off carefully. I could see that he was proud of it and he was using it all the time. As I drove, I started singing along to one of the songs on the tape.