



Growing up on the markets of Amsterdam



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I find it remarkable that this family business, which started nearly 100 years ago during the war, is still within our family. Four generations later, I feel proud to contribute to the markets of Amsterdam, an integral part of the city's culture.

I was born and raised in Amsterdam. My mother is Iraqi-Dutch, and my father is Polish-Dutch.

My grandmother on my mom's side fled Baghdad with her family. She was the only one who moved to the Netherlands, while the rest of her siblings moved to Israel. In Iraq, she met her husband, my grandfather, a Dutch man who was also living in Iraq at the time. Later, she moved with him to the Netherlands. My mother and her younger brother (my uncle) were born in Iraq. When they were just a few months old, they fled to the Netherlands due to the Jewish pogroms. Shortly afterward, they went to Israel and eventually settled permanently in the Netherlands. My mother never attended Jewish schools, but at home, religion played an important role. Her father, my grandfather, was not originally Jewish but later converted. He spent years studying Judaism.

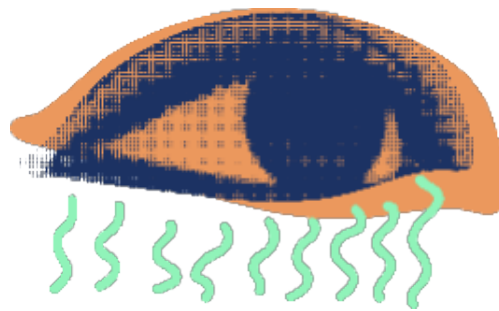
My father was born and raised in Amsterdam. He attended Jewish primary and secondary schools: Rosj Pina and Maimonides, where I would later go as well. My grandmother on my dad's side was born in the Netherlands. Her mother had fled Poland and met my great-grandfather here, a Jewish Dutchman. He owned a Jewish boxing school and participated in the Maccabiah Games. He was also the first in our family to start working in and with Amsterdam's markets business. After World War II, the Netherlands was a turbulent place. During that period, he rebuilt everything, including the market business in Amsterdam. Now, not far from 100 years later, this tradition still remains in the family. My father ran the market business, and now I am learning to take it over.



My great-grandfather started with the Waterloopleinmarkt and the Nieuwmarkt (today prominent markets in the city center of Amsterdam). Later, my father joined the market and took over the business from his grandfather. Over the years, he expanded the business to seven markets in Amsterdam. Since this year, I've been helping my father and working on taking over the business. Our work involves renting out all the market stalls to vendors.

Early in the morning, at 6:00 AM, I get up to set up the markets with my employees. I drive through the city—whether it's sunny or raining—using electric carts that carry all the loaded stalls. Once we arrive at the markets, we unload all the metals and material and set it up so that the stalls are ready for the vendors. In the afternoon, I do a round to check that everything is running smoothly. In the evening, we take everything down again and return the carts to the storage facility. My day starts very early and ends late, and the work is physically demanding. On top of that, I also handle all the administration for the stalls and vendors finances.

I find it remarkable that this family business started nearly 100 years ago, during the war, and is still within our family. It began with my great-grandfather, and now, four generations later, it has come to me. This beautiful but demanding work... The markets of Amsterdam are an integral part of the city's culture and play a very important role for the city and its residents. I feel proud to contribute to this.



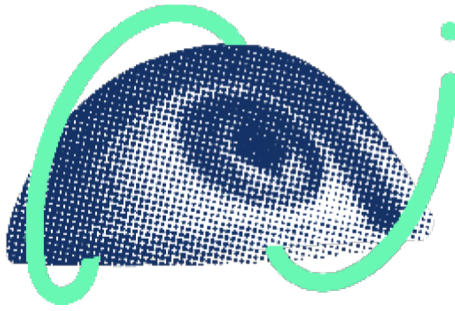
Like my father, I attended the Jewish schools Rosj Pina and Maimonides. Rosj Pina was my primary school, and after that, I went to Maimonides for secondary school. I am grateful to have been part of the Jewish community from a young age. It shaped my identity and gave me valuable friendships and connections that last to this day.

At these schools, I learned not only the usual subjects but also took Jewish studies and gained insight into the rich Jewish traditions and culture. The combination of regular and Jewish education gave me a broad foundation. It was special to be surrounded daily by other Jewish children and to celebrate holidays and traditions together. These shared experiences created a strong bond with my classmates and deepened my understanding of my own heritage and culture.

I have always played as a goalkeeper for various football clubs in Amsterdam and participated in several tournaments. Initially, I played for national teams, and later, I joined Maccabi Netherlands. With Maccabi, we participated in the European Maccabiah Games in Budapest and Haifa, Israel. We also competed in the Youth Games in Munich and Düsseldorf. Nowadays, I play indoor football with Maccabi Netherlands, competing against other Dutch clubs.

Since the war broke out on October 7, our indoor football team has faced a lot of antisemitism and anti-Zionism. We are the only Jewish indoor football team registered with the KNVB (Royal Dutch Football Association). Often, we play against teams with opposing viewpoints, which has sometimes led to heated matches that ended in physical altercations. As a result, police presence is now mandatory at our games, as the risks for escalation is too high.

As strange as it may sound, for me, the presence of police or armed guards at Jewish events is nothing new. At my primary and secondary schools, the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee and heavy security were always present. Even if we just went to the supermarket briefly, we were accompanied by security.



From a young age, I've played the piano. I learned at a Jewish music school, where I was also part of a Jewish band. I also formed a duo with a close friend who played the saxophone.

With both the duo and the band, we often performed throughout the country. We played at various Jewish events, in Jewish retirement homes, and participated in competitions against other national bands. A particularly special moment was when I performed solo at a Holocaust commemoration at the Hollandsche Schouwburg. There, I played a composition I had written about the people who were deported to concentration camps through the Schouwburg.

I always feel a strange sensation when I stand in places that played such a dark role in history. To stand there as a free Jewish boy from Amsterdam at a commemoration deeply moves me every time. Music is an important outlet for me—a way to express myself and release my emotions.

A large part of my mother's family lives in Israel, so I visit often. I love it there and feel truly at home. Even now, during these challenging times, I fully support Israel.

Because of everything happening now, I notice that people often stand opposed to one another. Sometimes it feels like I constantly have to defend who I am and what I stand for. But the beautiful thing is: that one of my best friends is Moroccan, and even though we think very differently about the situation, we completely respect each other. Whenever there's an attack in Israel, he immediately texts me to ask how my family is doing and if everything is okay.

In the end, it's not about where we come from or what we believe but about the humanity we share with one another—a lesson I, as a Jew from Amsterdam with an international family and diverse circle of friends, experience every day.

