



Column: Set in stone

28/07/2017, by *Thijs Kolster*

A Saturday in Rabat, Morocco. On days like this, our routines are set in stone. They have been carved out by the life we live over here, but reveal traces of our Dutch roots too.

At 8.30 a.m. sharp, I'm in the shower. My wife has already been in, and our boys have been 'chilling' – as they call it – downstairs since half past seven. Springtime brings a clear blue sky with wisps of clouds shaped by the wind. The moment I come downstairs, our Saturday routine commences at its usual relentless pace. My wife drives the kids to the pool. They dive in at 10 a.m. for their swimming practice. Next, they rush to the international school for football training. I'm already there, because I'm one of the football coaches. The boys come running in, pull on their shin pads, socks and shoes, and join their friends. Two hours, a few drills, and some practice games later, it is time for our youngest to go to baseball practice, while our eldest has a half-hour break. Then his baseball training starts, and our youngest has a rest, a drink and a snack before he heads to a football game with the Young Citizen Club. In the meantime, the eldest is dropped off at a birthday party.

The pattern is similar to the routine we had back home, although it's been enhanced with more and, above all, different sports and activities the boys would otherwise never have come across. The routine is rigorous wherever you are in the world. With young children, Saturday has its own laws. And so my youngest son and I drive home after another very long Saturday. We pull up next to a metallic brown Jeep at the traffic lights.

I think: How ugly, who'd want to drive a car like that?

But my son exclaims: "Cooooool, that's what I want when I grow up!"

"Really, you'd want a car like that? I think it's ugly."

He gazes at me with a mixture of kindness and bafflement.

“Dad, you’re allowed to think that. I understand. You’re from a previous era. I’m from this era: The Fancy Era. And that car is fancy, dad!”

Some days, life shines bright, even when your son has just written you off in the most poetic way.