

## Background information Achterdam

The Achterdam used to have 123 'prostitution windows'. An operating permit expired at the end of 2006, at which time the permit holder applied for a new permit. It quickly became evident from public information that the Achterdam was not a romantic hooker street (anymore), but that it had been affected by criminal influences, in which the Heineken ransom played a significant role. That the Amsterdam underworld had branched out to the prostitution district in Alkmaar is also evident from the book 'The war in the Amsterdam underworld' by Bart Middelburg and Paul Vugts.

*In November 1983, the Netherlands was startled by the abduction of Alfred Heineken. He was abducted together with his driver Ab Doderer by Cor van Hout and Willem Holleeder. The abductors demanded and were given 35 million Dutch guilders. Following the release of Heineken and Doderer, the abductors were captured and sentenced. A large part of the ransom was never recovered. Following their release from prison, the Heineken-abductors took to trading in hash and purchased (presumably with the part of the Heineken-ransom that was never found) 'a small street' of window brothels on the Achterdam in Alkmaar, among other things. They appointed their friend and handyman Thomas van der Bijl as supervisor of these properties. After a disagreement with Holleeder in 1996, Van Hout continued on his own. The 63 windows on the Achterdam were placed under Levensvreugd Properties on Curaçao.*

*The book describes that Van der Bijl collected the proceeds from the Achterdam every week. The money was laundered via the Antilles and then pumped back into the Netherlands. Van Hout was convicted further to the Citypeak-investigation into drug trafficking. Following his prison sentence, Van Hout lived an increasingly richer life, partly thanks to the black money and laundered proceeds from the Achterdam. He was not able to enjoy his lifestyle very long, as Van Hout was shot to death on 24 January 2003. The then 'Achterdam-supervisor' Van der Bijl was shot to death in his café in Amsterdam-West in April 2006. He had allegedly expanded on the criminal activities as an anonymous witness. The two offenders for the assault on Van der Bijl were sentenced by the Amsterdam court to 14 ½ years in prison.*

*The Achterdam-premises remained in criminal hands following the death of the two men. Rob Griffhorst, among others, was detained in July 2007 in the laundering case relating to the inheritance of Cor van Hout. He was arrested in Malaga together with a second known criminal, Johan Verhoek – alias the Hakkelaar. Johan Verhoek was one of the largest hash traffickers in our country at the beginning of the nineties and used his drugs profits to purchase a number of Achterdam buildings through middlemen, according to the district attorney's office.*

Other criminal activities also took place behind the Achterdam-windows. Forced prostitution and human trafficking, as described in the so-called Sneep-report of the Ministry of Justice. A number of women traffickers of Turkish-German descent were convicted in 2008. For years they had been forcing women (mainly from Eastern Europe) to work as prostitutes. The women were lured to the Netherlands under false pretenses (lover boy practices, among other things) where they were forced to work 'behind the windows'. The women were constantly watched by pimps who were not shy of violence. For example, some women were forced to undergo breast enlargement operations and a number of women were given a tattoo of the initials of the women traffickers in their neck. Because everyone was terrified and no one had the courage to press charges, it took very long before these facts became known and the perpetrators could be apprehended and convicted. Fear is still an important factor in dealing with human trafficking.