

Humans of Amsterdam - Lieke

‘‘It was a Christmas shift when the call came over the radio: a young woman threatening to jump in front of a train. Light skin, red hair. The moment I heard the description, I knew it was her.

I sent her a message on Instagram immediately, but she didn’t respond. Eventually, she replied, but she didn’t want to be found. We searched desperately through Central Station, scanning every platform. And eventually, there she was.

She looked beautiful. Perfect makeup, lipstick carefully applied. As if she were dressed for a Christmas evening dinner. And yet, in that moment, she was on the brink of ending everything. It reminded me again that suicide has no face or a particular look.

We guided her to a quiet room. I accompanied her to the psychiatric emergency unit. She had written me DM’s prior on Instagram. I write about my work as a police officer, so she had reached out to me prior, saying that she had attempted to end her life multiple times.

Months later, after we pulled her off the train tracks, she reached out again. She was doing better. She was pregnant, and that became her reason to live.

Moments like this are why I write. Writing has always been my greatest passion, though for years, I didn’t dare share it. I cared too much about what others thought. If @user30456 said, ‘‘What a nonsense,’’ I’d throw my entire post away.

But when I joined the police force, I thought: it would be incredible to write about our work, so I bought my first domain name and made a pact with myself: no matter what, I would keep writing.

Being a police officer makes you an easy target online. Yet, despite the criticism and the hate, I have always stayed true to that promise. In my work, I encounter suicide, despair, and people in vulnerable situations. That inspired me to write a letter called ‘‘*Dear You,*’’ addressed to anyone going through a difficult time.

In that letter, I tell people they always have a choice. That you are only one step away from a better life. Even if it doesn’t feel that way now, I hope you give life another chance. And that they can reach out to the police. I have received so many messages from people saying that that letter saved their lives.’’