

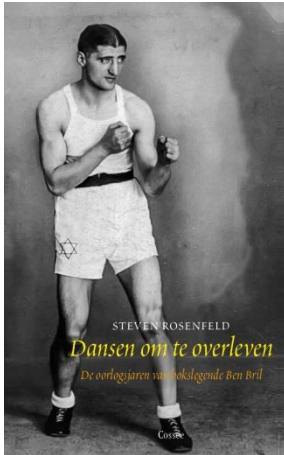


Steven Rosenfeld – *Dancing for Survival*

240 pages, 69,000 words, published in 2015

Full English manuscript available, films rights sold

“Rosenfeld uses very detailed information to turn his story into literary non-fiction, which make it seem like you are actually standing next to Ben Bril and his fellow prisoners. The richness of details, Rosenfeld’s writing skills and the tension that is tangible because of that, causes that reading this story is as pleasant as reading a novel.” – *Trouw*



Dancing for Survival tells the story about the previously unknown period of one of the best boxers the Netherlands has ever known, Ben Bril.

Amsterdam, 1942. Ben Bril and his wife and son are forced to go into hiding above what used to be their bakery, but get betrayed and are transported to the Vught transit camp. In order to survive in camp Vught, it is crucial to make yourself indispensable. Although at first he was afraid to let the camp authorities know he was a famous boxer, the revelation enables him to protect his family: he has to fight to stay alive.

Even before Jews were required to wear a Jewish badge on their clothes, the proud world champion Bril let himself be photographed with one on his boxing uniform. Now, in the infamous camp, he has to let go of his pride and be pragmatic, for the sake of his wife and son. He knows the rules and knows that following those rules is the only way to survive. This is the way he fights, the way he lives. He gets a job, gets promoted to the position of *Blockälteste* and in the boxing ring he lets German boxing heroes defeat him. He goes along with it. His good friend and fellow boxer Appie de Vries does not understand Bril’s choices: he is consorting with the enemy.

Sabotage or cooperate, give up or carry on, withstand or withdraw? What to do when none of the choices seem right? *Dancing for Survival* is a thrilling and captivating tribute to a Jewish boxer who fought the Nazis with his bare hands and lived to tell about it afterwards.

Steven Rosenfeld (1959) has been an award-winning American journalist for nearly 30 years. He covers national affairs for AlterNet.org. Previously, he has reported for National Public Radio, Monitor Radio, and Vermont newspapers. He has written three books on U.S. elections. *Dancing for Survival* is his first biographical novel. He is Ben Bril’s grandnephew and for this novel he interviewed among others Ben Bril’s son Ab. The researched material will be submitted to the National Memorial Camp Vught in the Netherlands.

Barend (Bennie) Bril (1912–2003) won his first of eight national boxing titles in 1927, at the age of fifteen. He successfully competed in the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam, reaching the quarter-finals. He was selected for the 1936 Olympics in Germany, but refused to compete. During World War II, he and his family were deported to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. He survived, but was no longer able to continue his boxing career. He remained an important figure in Dutch boxing and gained a reputation for criticizing jury decisions at international tournaments. He died at the age of 91, and is remembered with the annual ‘Ben Bril Memorial’ boxing event, held every second Monday in October.

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