

# Rami bounces back after losing Chicago hope to record his first English album

PICTURE: GIL BEN-HUR

**ISRAELI** Rami Feinstein is preparing to record his first album in English.

His Jumpstarter campaign ended this week after almost reaching his target.

Rami said he came to music in his mid-20s.

"My father was dean and head of Jewish studies at New York University and Columbia," he said.

"My family were all musical, but also very into academia. I was going in that direction for a while.

"I thought I was going to get my master's and doctorate, and that I would make a career of lecturing and researching in history and sociology. But I thought I would give the music thing a year and see how big it should be in my life.

"So I took a year off after I finished my bachelor's degree and took a few courses at Rimón Music School.

"I was 27 at the time. I had been writing songs since I was a kid, but I never thought it was what I wanted to be in life.

"But it hit me during that time

**BY ARIEL DOMINIQUE HENDELMAN**

that this is what I want to be doing. Then I started a whole journey that brought me here."

He decided to release his album in English as he comes from an American family.

He explained: "I was born in the States and moved to Israel when I was two.

"We speak 'Hebrish' at home, 'Pass me the *melach* (salt)'. I always thought I could be articulate in English, but that I could be more accurate in Hebrew.

A head of a record label in Chicago heard my music through a friend and he really liked it, so he asked if I wanted to come and make an album with them in Chicago."

Rami continued: "I would write songs on the bus on the way to work, really looking forward to recording this album.

"I wrote it in English because I thought I would give it a try and I was really happy and surprised by the outcome. The songs are

simple and upfront.

"So we went to Chicago last August for a month and, although we had a contract and everything, it became clear that he was not in a position to fulfill what he had promised.

"I was obviously very disappointed and maybe heartbroken.

"We came back to Israel and I was called to have a segment on the sports channel on this morning show where I would play songs.

"That kind of took my mind off of what had happened and I took some time and went back into the studio.

"I decided that this is an album I really wanted to make and I think other people will like. I'm working on it now."

But was Rami worried that the audience he had built with three albums in Hebrew wouldn't be happy about the switch to English?

"From the reactions and feedback that I'm getting, I'm not worried," he replied.

"I share some of the work in



**'HEBRISH' AT HOME: Rami Feinstein**

progress with my fans and I know they like it.

"I've also been touring America and performing in Jewish communities for a few years now.

"I've been asked if I would ever do anything in English, so I think some of my fans have been waiting for this."

[ramifeinstein.bandcamp.com](http://ramifeinstein.bandcamp.com)

## Music from the heart

Local singer/songwriter Rami Feinstein prepares to release his first album in English

BY ARIEL DOMINIQUE HENDELMAN

Rami Feinstein loves music with a pure passion that is at once refreshing and inspiring. This pure love comes through in every note he plays, every line he sings. A talented guitarist and singer with three studio albums and a solid fan base under his belt, Feinstein is preparing to release his first album in English. His Jumpstarter campaign to support the new album goes until August 21st. Feinstein sat down with *The Jerusalem Post* to discuss the heartbreaking story that led him to putting out an English album, viewing his fans as musical partners and speaking "Hebrish."

**When did you first learn you were a musician?**

I came to it later in life. My father was dean and head of Jewish studies at NYU and Columbia. My family were all musical but also very into academia. I was going in that direction for a while. I thought I was going to get my master's and doctorate, and that I would make a career of lecturing and researching in history and sociology. But I thought I would give the music thing a year and see how big it should be in my life.

So I took a year off after I finished my bachelor's degree and took a few courses at Rimón Music School. I was 27 at the time. I had been writing songs since I was a kid, but I never thought it was what I wanted to be in life. But it hit me during that time that this is what I want to be doing. Then I started a whole journey that brought me here.

**What precipitated the decision to release an album in English?**

I come from an American family. I was born in the States and moved to Israel when I was two years old. We speak 'Hebrish' at home, 'Pass me the *melach* [salt]'. I always thought I could be articulate in English, but that I could be more accurate in Hebrew. A head of a record label in Chicago heard my music through a friend and he really liked it, so he asked if I wanted to come and make an album with them in Chicago.

This is actually the story of the album. I took a year, working hard to support my family. I would write songs on the bus on the way to work, really looking forward to recording this album. I wrote it in English because I thought I would give it a try and I was really



RAMI FEINSTEIN: For me, music is a way of connecting to people. (Gil Ben-Hur)

happy and surprised by the outcome. The songs are simple and upfront.

So we went to Chicago last August for a month, and although we had a contract and everything, it became clear that he was not in a position to fulfill what he had promised. I was obviously very disappointed and maybe heartbroken. We came back to Israel and I was called to have a segment on the sports channel on this morning show where I would play songs. That kind of took my mind off of what had happened and I took some time and went back into the studio. I decided

that this is an album I really wanted to make and I think other people will like. I'm working on it now.

**How is the crowdfunding campaign for the new album going?**

It's going well. I'm using Jumpstarter. We're up to 55% and have a few days left. Hopefully we can get a nice push at the end and get it done. But there's a lot of support and people who really want this to happen. That's more exciting than the amount of money. Of course I would love to get the right amount to

finish the album, but the support of people who know me and my songs and have been coming to shows for years is really moving. It's been such a good experience to receive all of that support and love.

For me, music is a way of connecting to people. That's happening now, so this has been a really positive experience. I just hope to reach the goal and get this album done. Sharing my story and my music, and the way that I do things in general, is to try to create a partnership between me and the people who like my music and want me to do more of that.

The situation with the music industry right now, maybe not huge successful artists, but those of us who are just making music, so many stop because it's so hard to be rewarded for that or to even pay for the costs. It's a way for me to say, 'Hey, this is what I do and if you like it, help me keep going.'

There was a nice kosher bagel place next to my family's house in New Jersey. Crowdfunding is like that. It's like having a small business next to you and one day you discover that it's about to close. But let's say the shop owner sends you an email and says for him to continue providing this for the community, if you buy some bagels in advance at a better price than what you usually pay, it will help him stay open and continue his business. You have the choice. Maybe you don't care. But if you want this small business to keep going, that's the offer on the table.

I really believe in that. Musicians have to be honest with their followers and I try to do that. Telling the story of what happened to me is painful, but it was an easy decision that I should tell it. Hopefully people can be inspired and overcome things in their lives.

**Did you have any concerns that the audience you've built up from your Hebrew music wouldn't be able to switch to English as easily as you?**

From the reactions and feedback that I'm getting, I'm not worried. I share some of the work in progress with my fans and I know they like it. I've also been touring the US and performing in Jewish communities for a few years now. I've been asked if I would ever do anything in English, so I think some of my fans have been waiting for this.

Rami Feinstein's Jumpstarter campaign can be found at: [jumpstarter.co.il/en/projects/1213](http://jumpstarter.co.il/en/projects/1213)



# Israeli folk singer-songwriter to perform in Q-C on Monday



Amanda Hancock ahancock@qctimes.com Apr 19, 2018

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Israeli folk-rock singer Rami Feinstein will perform Monday in the Quad Cities during a Jewish Federation of the Quad-Cities event celebrating Israel Independence Day.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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### IF YOU GO

**WHAT:** Israeli singer/songwriter Rami Feinstein in concert to celebrate the Israeli Independence Day.

**WHEN:** 7 p.m. Monday

**WHERE:** Temple Emanuel, 1115 Mississippi Ave., Davenport

**HOW MUCH:** Free and open to the public. For more info about Feinstein's music, visit [www.facebook.com/ramifeinsteinpage](http://www.facebook.com/ramifeinsteinpage) or [www.ramifeinstein.com](http://www.ramifeinstein.com).



After his third day of working as a nail products salesperson at a mall kiosk, Rami Feinstein went home and needed to vent.

Feinstein grabbed his guitar and turned his sales pitch, in which he asked passersby if they would like to see "something amazing," into lyrics.

The "something amazing," by the way, was a professional nail buffer.

"It was just me venting with a song after a long day," he said. "And it was to help me remember the sales pitch."

Feinstein recorded a video of the song and shared it with friends. His friends shared it, too, and within a few days the song had "gone viral by email," Feinstein said.

A few months later, Feinstein, who has been writing songs since he was a teenager, ended up making enough money from his kiosk job to record his debut album.

### ABOUT JEWISH FEDERATION OF THE QUAD-CITIES

The Jewish Federation of the Quad-Cities is a non-profit, founded in 1980, that addresses

including cultural, religious, educational, family welfare, care of the aged and interfaith relations. The organization also combats hate and anti-Semitism by supporting religious liberty and civil rights for everyone. Its office is at 2715 30th St., Rock Island. For more info, visit [jfac.org](http://jfac.org).

The Israeli folk-rock singer-songwriter released that album, "A Matter of Time," in 2008. His first hit song, called "Something Amazing," was featured as a bonus track.

"It's pretty much a crazy story. People just loved it," Feinstein said during a phone interview earlier this week a few hours before playing a concert in Milwaukee.

Since then, Feinstein has continued making music. He released his second album in June 2012 and his third project, called "231" in Aug. 2016. He plays gigs regularly in Tel Aviv, Israel, where he has lived since age 2. He's currently on his fifth U.S. tour, which includes a stop Monday in the Quad-Cities.

Feinstein is set to perform Monday during an event celebrating Israel Independence Day at Temple Emanuel, 1115 Mississippi Ave., Davenport. The event is presented by the Jewish Federation of the Quad-Cities.

"It's very special for me to come as an Israeli artist and get together with people who want to celebrate this," Feinstein said. "It's a good opportunity for us to unite and emphasize the common ground we have."

Wherever he performs, Feinstein said his goal is simple: "To form a connection."

"The most important thing to me is to express myself, my views and my emotions that can be inspiring and meaningful to other people," he said. "I want people to be able to see themselves in my songs."

"It may sound serious," Feinstein added. "But some of the songs are kind of funny."

That goes for "Something Amazing," which has over [40,000 views on YouTube](#).

The song opens with these words: "Excuse me, miss, can I ask you a question? Do you have natural nails? Can I show you something amazing for only 20 seconds of your time?"

Every now and then, people still point Feinstein out on the street as the guy who wrote the song about selling nail products.

"For Israelis that work at kiosks, this is like an informal anthem," he said.

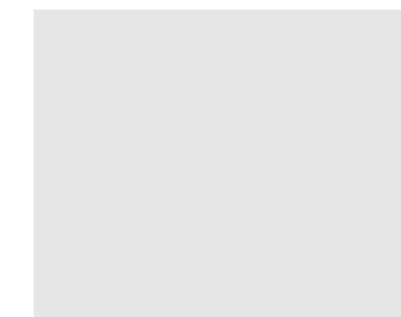
For Feinstein, the song brings up a "bittersweet memory."

"It was very challenging, but I had a goal to save up money and that kept me going," he said. "And I did good. I was not a bad salesman."

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# The Telegraph

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## Rami Feinstein to tour in United States in April

By [Ben Harris](#) · March 19, 2013

Last month, JTA published an [article](#) about Israeli kiosk workers at American shopping malls. The article, which noted that the U.S. Embassy in Israel is trying to crack down on the practice, implied that [Rami Feinstein](#), an American-born Israeli singer, had worked illegally in the United States.

In fact, Feinstein is a U.S. citizen. Born in New York, Feinstein moved with his parents to Israel at age 2. He was raised in Ranaana, home to a large American emigrant community, and later in Sha'are Tikva. He now lives in Tel Aviv.

Descended from a family of poets and writers -- his grandfather was a poet who founded an educational institute in New York; his playwright father founded a theater, Habima Haketana, also in New York -- Feinstein began composing songs as a teenager. His first album was released in 2008, financed in part with the money he made working in the United States. The song "Something Amazing" was inspired by the experience of selling cosmetics in shopping malls.







His second album came out last year. One song, "Yom Gadol," has been adopted as an anthem by the Maccabi Tel Aviv basketball club.

"The whole concept of making it is something that I've been exploring," Feinstein said by phone from Israel. "It's something that I deal with a lot in my last album. There's a certain tension between wanting the biggest dreams on one hand at the same time learning how to appreciate the accomplishments that you are having right here and right now. And sometimes it's hard to do both."

Musically, Feinstein operates mainly in the singer-songwriter mode. Dave Matthews, John Mayer, Jason Mraz and Paul Simon are all acknowledged influences. But Feinstein can also get funky. "Yom Gadol" features a full band and horns and some nice groovework.

Unlike some Jewish artists intent on achieving mainstream success, Feinstein doesn't shy from his roots. When he tours in the United States, he performs in synagogues as well as clubs. And when Nefesh B'Nefesh approached him about writing a song to encourage immigration to Israel, he readily agreed.

"I'm very Zionist," Feinstein said. "For me, to come and perform in the States -- it's not just a different gig in a different country. It's something that has meaning. I have no problem identifying with that. I'm not a musician that needs to be categorized as a cosmopolitan. I've been in a lot of places. I think that music is definitely something that connects people all over the world. But I also have no problem in sharing the group that I belong to."

Feinstein will be in the United States in late April and will be performing at several Israel Independence Day events.





The Justice > Arts

## Feinstein provides a personal performance

By Samantha Shokin

Published: Tuesday, October 28, 2008

Updated: Tuesday, May 31, 2011 23:05

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On Saturday night, Israeli folk-rock singer and songwriter Rami Feinstein held a cozy performance at Cholmondeley's for an intimate audience, only half of whom could actually understand his Hebrew lyrics. Feinstein is an up-and-coming alternative star on his first tour in the United States. He has been playing in a band for the past five years and has only recently released his first solo album. The night opened with a performance by Brandeis Hillel's very own Daniel Harris Levine (or, as the many flyers advertising the night attested, "the guy who sits at the table at Usdan playing music.") Levine's performance, mellow and relaxed, was highlighted by a couple of songs that used a type of musical loop machine to give a "one-man band" effect to his playing. While certain snippets of his song were instantly recorded and played on repeat, he was able to contribute other instruments and sound bites, creating a sense of canonical melody and almost psychedelic ambiance. His hosting and jokes were well-received, though the first several songs he played were particularly downbeat and slightly droning.

Feinstein arrived dressed in a black jacket to match his left-handed acoustic guitar and was greeted by swoons from admiring fans (mostly girls). He introduced himself casually, approving of the comforting environment of Chum's. After a quick poll revealed a limited number of Hebrew speakers in the audience, Feinstein pointed out that his Hebrew-language lyrics are "actually good" and that no one should have any problem following along with his many telling body motions and facial expressions.



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The songs he played were mostly upbeat, and several of them were humorous, according to his English summarization of the lyrics. Some of the subjects he touched on included picking up girls at a bar, the perfect time to ask someone on a date and his experience as a nail product salesman at an American mall. Varied and comical, his performance was also highly energetic despite his being confined to one swivel chair the entire night. Indeed, even the non-Hebrew speakers in the audience could make out the passion in his lyrics through many his emphatic displays of emotion via facial expression and gestures. The tone and quality of his singing style is comparable to that of Jason Mraz or John Mayer-upbeat and descriptive, often with vivid lyrics and/or stories used to capture the audience, accompanied by catchy pop/rock melodies.

Feinstein sang one particularly captivating and funny song was sung in English at the end of the concert. Titled "Something Amazing," it tells of Feinstein's aforementioned experience working as a nail product salesman to raise money to make his album. Though the melody and expression were serious, the subject was lighthearted compared to the rest of the night's song topics. Feinstein also injected his concert with funny commentary about American versus Israeli culture, similarities of which obsession with celebrity lifestyles and the differing opinions as to when it is timely enough to call a girl and not sound "desperate."

Feinstein's performance was enjoyable and also easy to relate to on a personal level. His welcoming demeanor made the audience appreciate song lyrics attuned to issues everyone can sympathize with or at least laugh about-under any cultural context. Feinstein is a talented aspiring musician, and newcomers and fans alike should keep an eye out for his newly released album that will surely be "something amazing."

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**New Album**



Rami Feinstein - I feel like I turned out tall by mistake Eran Tal



## Rami Feinstein is staying here

Singer-songwriter says theme of his new album, 'Someone Has to Stay Here,' is desire to pursue your dreams while learning to appreciate what you have

Noga Martin  
Published: 07.27.12, 07:43 / [Israel Culture](#)

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"I started writing songs when I was little – writing words. I started writing music when I was about 16 or 17," Rami Feinstein tells Ynet on a breathlessly hot July night before taking the stage at the Container Bar in [Jaffa Port](#).

Now, he says, there are songs that start with the words, and there are songs that are born from the melody. And many of his songs are written together – words and music. But "even before I begin to play, it starts from an idea, something I feel I have to say," Feinstein explains.

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The 36-year-old singer-songwriter came very close to choosing a life behind the lectern, not the microphone. He served as an officer in the IDF and completed his BA with every intention of pursuing a doctorate in [Jewish history](#) and sociology. Then he made the fateful decision to take a year off to "think a little, give [music](#) a chance."



In concert at the Zanna Bar (Photo: Fran Tal)



"I didn't go back," he smiles.

Feinstein released his debut album, "A Matter of Time," in 2008. His second album, "Someone Has to Stay Here," came out in June.

Reviews of "Someone Has to Stay Here" have been overwhelmingly positive, with critics and bloggers describing the music as rock, folk-rock, or funk. On stage, the chemistry between Feinstein (on acoustic guitar) and the musicians he plays with: Dan Eckert (bass); Ben Labi (guitar); Aviv Cohen-Hashani (drums); Gilad Jacobson (keyboards); Eli Chen Tov (violin); and Oran Ben Avi (saxophone) is clear. He's been playing with some for two years, with others for six or seven.



**Feinstein also co-produced 'Someone Has to Stay Here'**

"The 'click' usually happens after you've performed together for a while. I can't put my finger on when exactly it happened, but I feel great (with them,)" he says.

When asked how the new album is different from the first, Feinstein – who produced it in collaboration with Eckert – says that from a musical point of view, "Someone Has to Stay Here" bears his own very strong musical stamp. And the lyrics, he says, reflect the different things he's been through. "That's really the theme. The need and the desire to follow your dreams vs. the goal of teaching yourself to appreciate what you have."

Unlike some artists, Feinstein doesn't write to vent. He says that he finds it difficult to write hot on the heels of heartbreak. "First, you take it in, work it through. Later, when things calm down and I've gotten some insights, I can work it into a song."

Does he feel that he is consistently able to realize his musical vision? "I create within the limitations of the medium I've chosen," he says. "If I weren't able to express myself authentically, I don't think I'd do it."

Feinstein, the son of immigrants from the US, describes his connection to his family's "American-ness" as "strong." While fully conversant not only in English but also in the American mentality, he writes in Hebrew. "I feel that in English I can be articulate, but in Hebrew I can be accurate," he says. "It's very important to me to express my feelings exactly."

Nevertheless, he doesn't rule out writing material in English in the future, as many Israeli musicians have done. In fact, he has started translating the lyrics of the new album into English, a project that he says presents challenges because his language is quite idiomatic.

One last point

– height. Feinstein often jokes that at 1.93 meters (6'3" ) he is the tallest musician in Israel. Has being tall ever been a problem? No, he laughs, it's just a little unusual. "Generally, people who are creative seem to be shorter. It's like I'm tall by mistake."

**Rami and his group will be performing at the Tamuna Theater in Tel Aviv on August 28.**

[Rami Feinstein on Myspace](#)

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# סופר אותם

**רגע לפני שרמי פיינשטיין פנה למסלול המהיר לדוקטורט, הוא החליט לתת צ'אנס לחיידק המוזיקלי שבקרבו ● עכשיו הוא מוציא אלבום בעזרת גיוס המונים אשר שמו, "231", הוא מחווה למספר האנשים שהשתתפו במימונו**

**יעקב בראון**



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למסלול ישיר לרוקטורט, החליט לתת צ'אנס לחיידק הזה שנקרא מוזיקה. "עד אז כתבתי ושרתי, אם כי לא בפול גז". שנת הכיניים היא, שכללה שיעורים בריטון, הביאה אותו להחליטה לעזוב את האקדמיה פור גוד.

פיינשטיין מתקדם מאלבום לאלבום עקב אחר אגודל. "אני אוהב את הלאט", הוא מתמצת את השקפת עולמו. את שני אלבומיו הראשונים - "עניין של לאט" (2008), ו"מישהו חייב להישאר כאן" (2012) מימן בעבודה במכ"ר רוח בקניונים בארצות הברית. השיר שכתב על החוויה הזו, Something Amazing - המוכר כ"שיר העגלות/שיר שחחרר מעולם לא שוחרר לרדיו, אך הפך להמנון הלא רשמי של הישראלים שעובדים בקניונים ברחבי העולם, וזכה ליותר מ-150,000 השמעות וצפיית ברחבי הרשת.

לאחר שצבר קהל בהופעותיו, החל לייסד לשנות כיוון באמצעות האתר "ג'אמפסטארט" - שבאמצעותו גייס מעל 50 אלף שקל. "צברתי שם חוויות יפות, תוך כדי אפשרות להרגיש קרוב לקהל שלי, שהולך אחרי בנאמנות מהופעה להופעה", הוא מסכם.

"אני יכול ליהנות בהופעה מול חמישה אנשים לא פחות מהופעה מול אלפי אנשים", מוסיף פיינשטיין. "עשיתי גם את זה וגם את זה, בארץ ובארצות הברית, ואני נהנה בכל מצב כלי לחפש קפיצות דרך. מסיקה בתוכנית ריאליטי שאלה אותי פעם אם לא הייתי רוצה להשיג חשיפה מתוכנית כזאת, השבתי לה שבלעדיה יש לי יותר קהל מאשר ל-99% מאלה שהשתתפו שם במרוצת השנים. אם ככה, בשביל מה אני צריך את זה?"

איך אומרים? הכל טוב. רק מבאסים אותו ביטלונותיה הצורבים והמתמשכים של מכבי תל אביב כדורסל, קבר צתו האהודה של פיינשטיין, 1.93 מטר, שבנעוריו שיחק בקבוצת הנערים שלה. "זהו בסדר", הוא מעודד את עצמו. "זה מכבי, לא?".

רמי פיינשטיין - "231", 9.4, שבת, 18:00, "כאוס לופט", תל אביב

"231". זה השם הבלתי שגורתי שבחר המור רמי פיינשטיין להקניק לאלבום השלישי שיבא לאח

רונה. "זאת המחווה שלי ל-231 האנשים שהשתתפו במימון האלבום באמצעות האתר 'ג'אמפסטארט'", הוא מסביר. "בכל שיר כאלבום יש גרעין של מציאות פלוס תוספות מהרמיון שלי. אני זמר שמספר סיפורים בשירים שלי".

אתה שר בירק אנהרני על התנונה פרטית. גם זה היה אמיתי?

"לגמרי. יש כאן ניסיון לצאת נגד תעשיית התנונות, שהאבדת ומרששת, ונגד המסגרת הרבנית, שלא בהכרח מייצגת את תפיסת העולם שלנו. כמו השירים האחרים באלבום, גם השיר הזה לקוח מהחיים".

מעבר למידת פרסומו, וזה פיינשטיין למפיק מוזיקלי מליגת העל. "יוסי מין הוא מהטופ של הטופ, מבכירי המוזיקאים שיש לנו, אחד שעבד עם שסות כמו לו ריד ודיוויד בואי", נפער פיינשטיין. "העבודה איתו הייתה שיר עזר מאלף והיה לנו חיבור חזק. אצלו באים לביטוי החיוך והכיף בתוך הגרוב, תוך שהוא מראה שהוא יודע להקשיב למוזיקאי כמוני, שהוא פחות מנוסה ממני".

כיון נגני האלבום נכלל גם הצלן הוותיק יובל מסגר. "יובל גר קומה מעלי", מספר פיינשטיין. "הוא הניע לאלבום ממפגשים בחדר המדרגות ותרם מהניסיון הרב שלו".

פיינשטיין (39) בא ממשפחה של משוררים בארצות הברית ("אני קורא כחול ורעדה את מה שהם כתבו") ואביו המנהל, מרנין פיינשטיין, היה פרופסור להיסטוריה יהודית ולספרות עברית שגם כתב מחזות. הוא תל אביבי שגדל בשערי תקווה, מעבר לקו הירוק, וכע קבות זה "מתנגד לחרם תרבותי מכל סוג שהוא".

בתום שירתו הצבאי כקצין חינך, סיים פיינשטיין באוניברסיטת בר אילן בהצטיינות יתרה לימודי תואר ראשון בסוציולוגיה ובהיסטוריה של עם ישראל. לדבריו, רגע לפני שפנה