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# أنا الشعب

J'É SUIS LE PEUPLE

A FILM BY  
ANNA ROUSSILLON





# **JE SUIS LE PEUPLE**

***I AM THE PEOPLE***

**a film by Anna Roussillon**

**France - 2014 - 1h51**

**Image format 1.85 - Color - Sound 5.1**

**Film extract**

<https://vimeo.com/129536647>

## **CONTACT PRODUCTION & SALES**

hautlesmains productions  
Karim Aitouna & Thomas Micoulet  
+33 (0)6 63 73 44 37  
[contact@hautlesmainsproductions.fr](mailto:contact@hautlesmainsproductions.fr)

Narratio Films  
Malik Menai  
+33 (0)6 70 51 53 41  
[m.menai@narratiofilms.fr](mailto:m.menai@narratiofilms.fr)



## **SYNOPSIS**

As the Egyptian people rises up in Tahrir Square, rural villagers in the south are watching the revolution on TV.

From the overthrow of Mubarak to the fall of Morsi, the film follows the upheavals through the eyes of Farraj, a peasant in the Nile valley near Luxor.

In the daily life of the farmer, between hopes and disappointments, change is a long time coming.



# LETTER OF INTENT BY ANNA ROUSSILLON

Luxor. An August day, some five years ago. I went out to film the fields on the outskirts of town. Dozens of ibises hovered and landed, looking for seeds. I'd been there for half an hour or so when a man carrying a pick on his shoulder introduced himself: Farraj the farmer. Laughing about our shared audacity at being outside at an hour of the day when the sun was worse than scorching, he asked me what in the world I was doing. My new friend was sweaty, and seemed exhausted by the work he'd just finished: his legs were coated with mud. But I was immediately charmed by the twinkle of humor in his eyes. He was surprised when I spoke to him in Arabic, the words tumbling out quickly and wildly, about how I'd grown up in Egypt, was alone in Luxor, have an Egyptian grand-mother, and teach Arabic. He invited me to dinner that very evening, and we made an appointment to meet again.

That first evening we spent together, Farraj, by turns boastful and pensive, told me about himself. After attending the prestigious Al-Azhar University in Cairo, he had returned to his village to farm the family's lands. He loved watching wrestling on television; he speculated that his children might not become farmers. He discussed how his neighbors vacillate between working the fields and the fringes of the tourist market. That evening, Farraj's massive wife Harajiyyé had a backache. Timid and laconic, she listened to us, with a little smile playing around her lips.

Returning to the village again and again, I appropriated the setting, introducing it gradually into my camera lens, establishing a custom-made relationship with each inhabitant. But, in late January 2011,

protests spread like wildfire through Cairo and other northern Egyptian cities. For the entire world, Egypt became Tahrir Square: revolution in progress, an immense hope. While voices in the heart of Cairo were raised in revolutionary song, life in the village, some 700 kilometers to the south, continued pretty much as usual, according to its inhabitants. Little happened, except for the disappearance of the village police at the peak of the revolution.

My film takes root in this parcel of the Egyptian countryside. It shows the life of some of the village's inhabitants from the eve of the revolution to the year 2013. As a chronicle or a series of accounts, scenes of day-to-day routines are leavened with discussions and stories. The film shows how political thinking takes root in a rural area, giving rise to debate – sometimes on the margins and sometimes in the heart of daily life. Little by little, a certain political awakening occurs, in the hinterlands of a country that sparked a revolution. I distanced myself from the “center” of events, from the eye of the storm, to get a closer look at the enthusiasm, questioning, and reconfigurations that were occurring, as ripples from the revolution reached rural Egypt.

I examine the events as they relate to lifetimes, rather than in the tumult of mobilization and struggle. My film is an important reverse shot, providing perspective and context. It describes life in the village at the time of a revolution that did not suddenly suspend or rearrange people's lives. I focused on how new attitudes gradually penetrated the rural land, sending out tendrils, nesting in, seeking support.







## **ANNA ROUSSILLON**

Born in 1980 in Beyrouth, Anna Roussillon grew up in Cairo, then moved to Paris.

She studied philosophy, linguistics, language, literature and Arab civilization and documentary filmmaking in Lussas (France).

Graduated from Arabic, she teaches in Lyon, translates literary texts, participates in radio programs, while working on various film projects in relation with Egypt. *I am the people* is her first feature documentary.



## **AWARDS & FESTIVALS**

**Jihlava Documentary Film Festival, Czech Rep. , 2014**

- Best World Documentary
- Best Debut Film

**Entrevues Belfort, France, 2014**

- Best Feature Film
- Audience Feature Film Award

**Festival Int. de Cine, San Cristobal, Mexico, 2015**

- Best World Documentary

**Rotterdam Film Festival, Netherlands, 2015**

**True/False Film Festival, USA, 2015**

**Hong-Kong Film Festival, 2015**

- Best Documentary

**Hamburg Dokumentarfilmwoche, Germany, 2015**

- Best Documentary

**Visions du réel, Switzerland, 2015**

**Dok Fest Munich, Germany, 2015**

**Doxa Vancouver, Canada, 2015**

- Best Feature Documentary

**Fidadoc, Morocco, 2015**

- Best Documentary



## CREW

Director, Image

Anna Roussillon

Editing

Saskia Berthod, Chantal Piquet

Sound

Térence Meunier

Jean-Charles Bastion

Color grading

Alexandre Sadowsky

Production

HAUTLESMAINS PRODUCTIONS

Karim Aitouna, Thomas Micoulet

NARRATIO FILMS

Malik Menaï



