

A REVOLUTION IN FOUR SEASONS

“One flower does not make a spring.”

In *A REVOLUTION IN FOUR SEASONS*, two politically opposed young women fight to shape their lives along with the political future of Tunisia, the sole country to emerge from the Arab Spring uprisings as a functional democracy.

**Directed & Produced by Jessie Deeter,
Producer of WHO KILLED THE ELECTRIC CAR?**

***North American Distribution - Women Make Movies
International Distribution - Sideways Films***



“Sometimes in history, small countries assume a strategic significance out of all proportion to their size. As the lone Arab country to move forward from popular upheaval to democracy, Tunisia is now vital to the future of the entire Arab world.”

- Larry Diamond, *The Atlantic*, March 2015

Synopsis:

In December of 2010, Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi lit himself on fire in protest of government corruption and poor living conditions. This act was a catalyst for the Arab Spring; the people united in an unprecedented peaceful revolt against dictator Ben Ali, forcing him to flee the country. Tunisians who had never known democracy were then left with the question of what democracy in their country could mean. A REVOLUTION IN FOUR SEASONS seeks to answer that question from the perspective of two young women who persevere and blossom alongside their country. This four-year evolution is loosely characterized by four seasons: 2011 is the Summer of *hope*, 2012 the Autumn of *work*, 2013, the Winter of *despair* and 2014, the Spring of *democracy*.

Our film tracks journalist Emna Ben Jemaa and Constituent Assembly member Jawhara Ettis over the course of Tunisia's critical first four years after the Revolution. Emna is a secular journalist fighting to keep religion out of government, while Jawhara works within Parliament to help gently guide the nation towards more Islamic principles. Both women exhibit remarkable determination, wisdom, and resilience in their efforts to steer the country towards their own disparate versions of the perfect democracy. Through their eyes and actions, the audience can examine both the development of a new government and the destabilizing barriers it still faces. The women's roles in society are key indicators of the overall success of this crucial democratic experiment.

When we first meet them, Emna and Jawhara are on the brink of self-discovery both as women and as professionals. Like their country, they are full of hope and potential, seeking what comes next for them. With them we embark on an exploration of what it means to be a modern Islamic woman - balancing work, family, and politics in the context of a budding democracy. Over the four years following Tunisia's revolution Jawhara and Emna must make difficult compromises as ambitious participants in this fragile new climate. Paralleling this is Tunisia's development as it is threatened by economic strain, political assassinations, acts of terrorism, and protests which ultimately force Jawhara's government to step down.

Tunisia launched the Arab Spring in January 2011, with the first peaceful revolution in the region. It currently stands alone as the only Arab Spring country of six that still has a chance to be a functional democracy, having rightfully earned the Nobel Peace Prize for avoiding a backslide into chaos in 2015.

World Premiere: April 2016



Director/Producers:

Director/Producer: Jessie Deeter

Jessie's producing and directing credits include SPARK: A BURNING MAN STORY, which debuted at SXSW in 2013 and DEATH BY FIRE, which opened PBS's *FRONTLINE* season in 2010. Jessie is the producer of WHO KILLED THE ELECTRIC CAR? (Sony Pictures Classics, 2006) and she produced REVENGE OF THE ELECTRIC CAR, which aired on PBS's *Independent Lens* after its Tribeca premiere in 2011. She also produced on Alex Gibney's STEVE JOBS: THE MAN IN THE MACHINE, and is currently the producer of BUSY CHILD (working title), a feature documentary about artificial intelligence with director Chris Paine slated for release in 2017. Jessie has an MJ and MA from UC Berkeley and was a Fulbright scholar in Oman, Morocco and Tunisia in 2010-11.

Executive Producer: Marcy Garriott

Marcy Garriott is an independent documentary filmmaker based in Austin, Texas. She is a former board member and President of the Austin Film Society, and has served on the boards of Cine Las Americas (film festival and youth outreach organization) and KLRU (Austin public television station). Her director/producer credits include the award-winning documentary films SPLIT DECISION (PBS and First Run Features) and INSIDE THE CIRCLE (MTV and Cinema Libre Studios). Marcy also produced THE LEAST OF THESE, which premiered at SXSW and helped lead to substantial changes in immigration detention policies for children. She was lead producer on the award-winning documentary AN UNREAL DREAM: THE MICHAEL MORTON STORY about a Texas man wrongfully imprisoned for 25 years for the murder of his wife (CNN and First Run Features.) Most recently she served as an Executive Producer on PEACE OFFICER, which won the Documentary Grand Jury and Audience Awards at SXSW 2015.

Co-producer and Editor: Sara Maamouri

Sara is a documentary filmmaker and editor who has explored a diverse range of topics for over 14 years. Her work has touched on social, educational and political issues, from a teacher and students performing under extraordinary circumstances (THE MUSIC'S GONNA GET YOU THROUGH, 2010), and former enemies bound together through loss and discovery (IN THIS WAITING, 2 0 1 1) to rebuilding life in a former war zone (AMAL'S GARDEN, 2012) and meditating on the nature of memory for childhood refugees (*TWICE UPON A TIME*, in production). A multi-lingual Tunisian educated in New York and California, Ms. Maamouri brings international sensitivity to her editing, production and story development, while building transmedia narratives to enhance and further engage a constantly evolving audience base. Her films have premiered at several international festivals, including Dubai International Film Festival, Cinéma du Réel in France and Bird's Eye View in the U.K.

Co-producer: Rob Peterson

Rob has shot on and associate-produced several documentaries, including DEATH BY FIRE, which aired on PBS's *FRONTLINE* in 2010, and TAKING GUNS FROM BOYS, which premiered at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival and aired on KQED affiliates in 2007. He built houses as a Peace Corps volunteer in Tunisia in the '90s and speaks fluent Tunisian Arabic.

Additional Key Credits:

DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY
Bassem Aounallah & Hatem Nechi

COMPOSER
[Miguel Atwood-Ferguson](#)

EDITED BY
[Sara Maamouri](#)
[Chris A. Peterson](#), A.C.E.
[Bill Weber](#)

CONSULTING PRODUCERS
[Dan Geller](#)
[Megan Gelstein](#)
[Dayna Goldfine](#)

MUSIC SUPERVISOR
[Aminé Ramer](#)

CONSULTING EDITOR
[Ken Schneider](#)



Director's Statement

This film began when I was living abroad with my family in 2010 and 2011 as a Fulbright Scholar in Oman, Morocco and Tunisia. When the people of Tunisia, the country we lived in that seemed least likely to spark a Revolution, kicked out President Ben Ali, we knew that the world would never be the same. It was the equivalent of the fall of the Berlin wall, and, as a journalist and documentary filmmaker, I knew that I wanted to find a way to tell the story, especially the deeper question of what happens after a Revolution. What would democracy mean in a land that has never had it? What would be the role of the Islamists who were persecuted for so many years under the old authoritarian, Euro-centric, regime? Would the freedoms and rights of women be protected if Islamists are given more say in a newly democratic system?

My Tunisian film-making partner Sara Maamouri and I soon met two women on opposite sides of the political spectrum whom we thought were exceptional representatives of what their country was facing. Emna Ben Jemaa is a staunchly secular journalist/blogger and heroine of the Revolution, and Jawhara Ettis is an Islamist English teacher who, as it turns out, was elected to the first Parliament after the Revolution, in charge of writing Tunisia's new constitution. We have fallen in love with these women as they have matured from young idealists into mature women with families of their own. Over the four years of filming, their personal struggles mirrored the external challenges facing their country.

My love for and knowledge of the MENA region goes back to my time as a Peace Corps volunteer in Morocco in '94-96, when my then best friend, now husband, was a Peace Corps volunteer in Tunisia. We both speak French and Arabic, and I was the first person in UC Berkeley's journalism program to get a second Master's degree with a Middle East focus in 2001. We have lived and worked in countries through the region for two decades. It has been an honor to be able to tell the recent story of Tunisia through the eyes of these two remarkable women, Emna and Jawhara.

– Jessie Deeter



For more information, contact:

Jessie Deeter (Producer/Director)
jessie@jessiedeeter.com



revolutioninfourseasons.com

Appendix: Timeline of Events

1600's: Tunisia becomes part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire

1881: French troops occupy Tunisia, establishing it as a French protectorate 2 years later

1956: Tunisia gains its independence from France; Habib Bourgiba named Prime Minister (and then President in 1957 when Tunisia becomes a republic). Tunisia's constitution grants women full equality with men.

1987: Bloodless coup by Prime Minister Zine El Abidine Ben Ali who takes over as President

2006: Authorities launch a campaign against Islamic headscarves worn by some women

December 2010: 26-year-old street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi immolates himself in protest at the confiscation of his wares and the humiliation inflicted on him by a municipal official, kicking off revolutions in Tunisia and elsewhere ("Arab Spring")

2011: Summer of Hope

January: President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali steps down, after 23 years in power

October: Elections to a Constituent Assembly, tasked with creation of a new constitution, are held. International and internal observers declared the vote free and fair. The Ennahda Movement, formerly banned under the Ben Ali regime, wins a plurality of 90 seats out of a total of 217.

December: Former dissident and veteran human rights activist Moncef Marzouki is elected President; Ennahda leader Hamadi Jebali is sworn in as Prime Minister.

2012: Autumn of Work

Pluralistic Constituent Assembly begins work on new constitution.

May: Salafi Islamic extremists clash with security forces and attack a police station.

August: Thousands protest in Tunis against perceived moves by the government to reduce women's rights.

March: Ennahda declares it will not support making sharia the main source of legislation in the new constitution, maintaining the secular nature of the state. Ennahda's stance on the issue is criticized by hardline Islamists, who want full-blown sharia, and is welcomed by secular parties.

2013: Winter of Despair

February: Chokri Belaid, the leader of the leftist opposition and prominent critic of Ennahda, is assassinated by Islamic extremists. Prime Minister Jebali resigns after Ennahda rejects his proposals to form a government of technocrats.

May: Violent clashes with Salafi protestors.

July: Mohamed Brahmi, another opposition leader, is assassinated using the same gun. Mass demonstrations, a general strike and calls for the government to resign ensue.

December: After months of wrangling, Ennahda and mainly secular opposition agree on appointment of Mehdi Jomaa as head of an interim government, pending elections in late 2014.

2014: Spring of Democracy

January: Tunisia officially adopts its new Constitution, the most progressive in the MENA region. Dates are set for later in the year, to elect a new president and a General Assembly.

March: President Marzouki lifts state of emergency imposed during the 2011 revolution.

October: Nidaa Tounes, a secular coalition party, wins a plurality in free and fair General Assembly elections.

November–December: Presidential elections are held; Marzouki is defeated by Nidaa Tounes candidate Beji Caid Essebsi.

31 December: Essebsi is sworn in as President.

2015

March: ISIS group claims responsibility for an attack at the Bardo Museum in Tunis, co-located with the government Assembly building; 21 die.

June: ISIS gunman kills 38 people in the beach resort of Sousse. Government announces closure of extremist mosques.

October: The National Dialogue Quartet (composed of civil society leadership) receives the Nobel Peace Prize for helping transition to democracy.

The Timeline in Perspective

“In Tunisia, against the greatest of headwinds, people are proving that no one—no single country, no single culture, no single faith—has a monopoly on the ideals of democracy.

Across the political spectrum, secularists and Islamists, left and right, have come together in common purpose that shows how democratic transitions, while incredibly difficult, can succeed through courageous leadership and national consensus.

In just a few short years, the Tunisian people have negotiated a peaceful transfer of power from a transitional government to a democratically elected coalition government.

They drafted a new inclusive constitution that protects the freedom of assembly, the freedom of the press, and the freedom of religion, upholds human rights, guarantees equality for men and women.

They cast ballots in a free and fair election, choosing from more than 100 political parties...

They have created space for civil society to flourish. For the second year in a row, Freedom House has categorized Tunisia as “free”—the first Arab country to be recognized in this way...

The experts say on average, successful transitions from dictatorship to full democracy with rule of law take somewhere between 15 or 20 years in the best of circumstances.

For Tunisia, it’s been five years. So we need to put our expectations in line with the reality of the difficulty and the duration of these transitions.

So to our Tunisian friends... thank you for all that you have done to help Tunisia usher in a future that its people have fought for and a future that they deserve—one of peace, one of prosperity, one of security, of democracy for every single Tunisian.”

Antony J. Blinken
U.S. Deputy Secretary of State
Washington, D.C.
April 14, 2016

