'I may not come home anymore'

Police bullets killed Ahmed Basiony as he was filming the police firing on protesters in Cairo.

While this weekend, the majority of the inhabitants of Cairo are still happily celebrating, the military and hated policemen are trying to push the last stubborn protesters from the square and analysts at every television station are speculating about the state and the future of Egypt, friends of Ahmed Basiony are celebrating the revolution in silence. They are diffidently memorizing the events together with a cup of tea and a shisha, some with tears in their eyes. They're welcoming the fall of the regime, but are mourning the loss of their friend - one of the more than 300 victims of the revolution. Ahmed disappeared on Friday, January 28, the day that the violence in Egypt's cities erupted in full. His wife and children saw him for the last time when he went out in the early afternoon, armed with only his camera to capture images of the violence executed by the police. He had a foresight and told his wife and son: "I might not come home tonight." But he went anyway, driven by a tense feeling in his stomach and foreseeing that something big was about to happen.

"You have to imagine, here we have never seen demonstrations," his friend Badry says, who himself is a young painter. "And suddenly, thousands, millions of people are going on to the streets, are chasing the police and are taking over the city. If this happens, anything is possible. The atmosphere was electric, full of hope, also for Ahmed: it was now or never." All friends of Ahmed sitting around the table agree. "The barrier of fear was broken, " one of them adds to it. Ahmed's brother Basem is smiling a little bit. He is proud.

These are the ones, the Egyptians who have changed their country and the Arab world forever: students, teachers, artists, and a single accountant. No Muslim fundamentalists with beards, no professional revolutionaries, but ordinary boys and girls from middle class families who joined the protests based on a collective feeling of disgust that suddenly arose. Because they want a better life - they want freedom, meaning: a chance to make something of your life, without a government that tries to stop you with tactics like torture, arrestments and killing.

Ahmed Basiony loved art, media, technology and Internet: when he finally got a daughter last year - he wanted a girl - he did a poll on Facebook in order to choose a name. It resulted in Salma. Ahmed was a Muslim, he prayed whenever he had time and believed in God. But also he believed in art, as a way to make change possible. "For Ahmed, it was all the same," Basem says who himself is a young accountant. "Art, freedom of expression, freedom of speech, freedom in general." But the Egyptian government didn't like free thinkers and Ahmed had to move heaven and earth to get permission to write his thesis about a topic he was very passionate about: the artistic expression of sound. Sound art was something new, everything that was new symbolized change and change was considered a threat. It was this aversion to change that was frustrating Ahmed - who was now teaching media art - so much, his friends are telling me: an education system that was blocking progress and individual development - Ahmed wanted to change this system more than anything else.

It did cost his life. After four days of searching in all hospitals of Cairo, his brother found Ahmed eventually in a hospital just outside the city. He died at the age of 31. He was shot in his neck and in his face by snipers, as he was filming the police firing on demonstrators. The film is gone. Ahmed Basiony is now separated from his son of 6, his daughter of a 1 and from his wife. He is also separated from his brother who is sad but immensely proud: "He died so that we would have a better life. He died for Egypt."