

DREADLOCKS STORY

WRITTEN, DIRECTED &
PRODUCED BY
LINDA AINOUCHE



For the first time revealed: The hidden spiritual links
between Jamaican Rastas and Indian Sadhus

83 MINUTES / 2014

Languages: English/French/Hindi/Jamaican Patois

Subtitles: English/French/Spanish



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2015 LOOK AT MY PRODUCTIONS



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SYNOPSIS

Dreadlocks Story opens up the history of Rastas in a new light. It shows the spiritual history behind the criticized dreadlocks hairstyle and the roots of the Rastafari culture, which is entangled with the Hindu tradition in Jamaica. This topic has never been addressed, but is now divulged!

The documentary was filmed in four countries (France, India, Jamaica and the US) **with four different languages** (French, Hindi, Jamaican Patois and English) **and four local crews**. It covers a part of Jamaican and Indian history. It also gives a new approach to sensitive topics about beliefs and taboos.

There are many misperceptions and judgments about the Rasta way of life, but few have taken the time to understand the meaning behind their behavior. Hairstyle is the most universal and unavoidable form of body art. It is also one of the most interesting and commonly misunderstood. How and why can it be subject to prejudice and massacre?

If most defend an African heritage, why did the first Rastas mingle with Hindus?

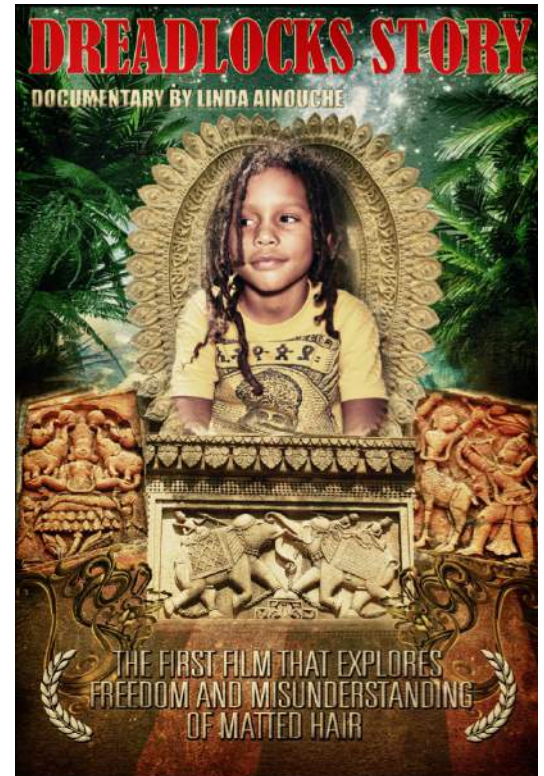
The uplifting Rasta movement began as slavery progressed. Rastafari pledges a response to African heirs to recover and rebuild their culture suppressed by brutal stultifying European domination. Within this context, it is an attempt for the survival of African culture and **an up-front anti-slavery, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle**. The British colonists ruled in Jamaica until 1962 and in India until 1947, slavery ended in Jamaica in 1838 and Indian workers were brought to the island from 1845 to 1917. Both Afro-Jamaicans and Indians were kidnapped and sent to work on sugar and banana plantations throughout Jamaica where they created positive relationships through their common oppressive hardships. The role played by Indians in Jamaica reminds us that enslaved people have not come only from Africa...**What is the original and unique way of life arising from the cross-cultural mixing** between the sons of African slaves, as well as African and Indian forced workers "under contracts" in the plantations?

Leonard Percival Howell, known as the First Rasta was the pioneer to speak about Rastafari (1932). He empowered and promoted the belief that everyone is divine and equal through the figure of the Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia. His first followers were mainly very poor, mentally persecuted people. Jailed for two years by the Colonial Government, Howell wrote a pamphlet (1935) under a Hindu pen name, which **unveiled relevance between the lifestyles of Rastas in Jamaica and Sadhus (Hindu Holy men) in India**.

In 1939, Howell became the first Black man to purchase and own a piece of land called Pinnacle where he implanted a free self-reliant community for his followers. Since then, **the murky persecutions** have been incessant to him and to Rastas with the Jamaica Government acting **to erase Leonard Howell from history**. After many raids, Pinnacle community was destroyed and totally burnt down by Colonists in 1958. The destruction of this autonomous society caused an exodus of Rastas throughout Jamaica. To wear dreadlocks became a mean of defiance and a blanket of protection against the Establishment.

Today, dreadlocks are not confined to Jamaica but found throughout the Caribbean and Diasporas. Thus, their origins reveal to be secondary to the vital role they are playing to mirror the state of mind of the minority rasta communities all over the world.

Although some accommodations have been made towards Rastas, the struggle against prejudice and discrimination are still prevalent.



ABOUT THE FILM

CASTING

Several well-known personalities and experts on Rastafari, and a wide range of Rastas, men and women, as well as Sadhus have been interviewed, including:

HÉLÈNE LEE

Writer of the book *The First Rasta*
Expert in Rastafari and Jamaican culture

PROFESSOR AJAI AND LAXMI MANSINGH

Pioneer Researchers studying
Indian presence in Jamaica

PROFESSOR VERENE SHEPHERD

Social Historian
University of the West Indies, Jamaica

MONTY HOWELL

Eldest son of Leonard Howell,
alias "The First Rasta"

DAVID HINDS

Founder, Lead Singer and Guitarist
of Reggae band Steel Pulse

BILL "BLADE" HOWELL

Youngest son of Leonard Howell,
alias "The First Rasta"

STYLE

The interviews have been achieved in the most simple environment – as it was – without any artificial lights. Archives, stills and videos illustrate the film. No narration. Interviewed people tell the story in a 'put-together' fashion.

FORMAT

ORIGINAL: DIGITAL

RATIO: 16:9

SOUND: STEREO

MEDIA: DVD, BLU-RAY

MUSIC

Music is credited to different well-known performers of various styles and countries. Among others:

STEEL PULSE from the UNITED KINGDOM

www.steelpulse.com
Legendary, award-winning reggae band,
celebrating 40 years in 2015

THE TWINKLE BROTHERS from JAMAICA

<https://myspace.com/twinklebrothersofficialsi>
Reggae band formed in 1962 and still active

SKA VENGERS from INDIA

theskavengers.com
The first Ska-Jazz band of India, formed in
2009, continue to tour all over Asia

JERRY JOHNSON from the USA

saxmanjerryjohnson.blogspot.com
Saxophonist extraordinaire, world-renowned
and in demand among the reggae scene

CATHERINE POTTER from CANADA

Widely considered Canada's master bansuri
player. The bansuri is a bamboo Indian flute
which she studied in India under the guidance
of renowned Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

**LINDA
AINOUCHE**

Linda Aïnouche, Ph.D, was first an Ethnographer Researcher and Cultural Analyst, specialized in ethnic minorities, misunderstood communities and religion before becoming a Documentary Film Director. She likes to understand the cross-cultural impacts that can emerge between out-cast people all over the world. Born in a multicultural family, she has been traveling from an early age and has since lived in several countries. Permanently among different cultures, she juggles with lifestyles, languages, customs and environment like she naturally breathes in.

Aïnouche's Hindu and Rastafari expertise gives her Dreadlocks Story documentary a unique style that addresses the Indian cultural influences on Rasta lifestyle and covers persecution and misperceptions of the Rastafari movement. Her wide range of fieldwork allows her to work with local people and see a hidden perspective rarely touched on. This gives Dreadlocks Story a richer and more personal spin on a history from the insider's point of view.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Linda Aïnouche interviewed scholars about History of Indians in Jamaica and Rastafari culture. She has intentionally worked in a challenging male-oriented environment to find out what Rasta people, women and men, from different generations, in Jamaica or abroad, had to say on camera about how they saw dreadlocks, how they regarded Hindu influences in Rastafari history and hence how they talked about their way of life and what discriminations they had to face as members of a minority group.

Indian people and Jamaican people deserve the kudos of their own history! As if 'Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar'...The British have been quite despicable to kidnap Indians to the Caribbean and to treat them like slaves. Those captured have made great contributions to Jamaican society and to Rastafari movement. Who knows if without Indians, Bob Marley would have met the same success?

PRESS

Selected Excerpts

Complete collection of articles available at www.dreadlockstory.com/press



“A unique and fascinating documentary, Dreadlocks Story explores the spiritual links between Jamaican Rastas and Indian Sadhus. The brainchild of French anthropologist Linda Aïnouche, the film examines, amongst other things, the shared colonial past of Jamaica and India, which birthed a particular form of self expression amongst its people – specifically, the way they wore their hair.”

-Davina Hamilton, The Voice UK, June 13th, 2015



“The rich and illuminating documentary is based on qualitative interviews from experts in Rasta culture (including Birmingham-born David Hinds, the lead singer of the legendary band Steel Pulse as well as researchers Ajai and Laxmi Mansingh). Aïnouche also draws from her own extensive knowledge about Indian culture into the film making it more insightful.”

-by Archana Venkatraman, India News Bulletin UK, June 13th, 2015



“[A] labor of love, [...] richly illustrated with archival material, stills and videos. It goes into the history of the now smirked upon dreadlocks hairstyle and the roots of the Rastafari culture, which is entangled with the Hindu tradition in Jamaica. Linda has also tried to elicit responses from Rasta men and women from different generations on how they see dreadlocks, how they regard Hindu influences on Rastafari history.”

-by Parveen Chopra, South Asian Times USA, October 18th, 2014



“The film not only reminds audiences of the rich cultural and ethnic heritage of Jamaica’s people, but also speaks to the similarities between the experiences of Africans in the transatlantic slave trade and Indian laborers forced into

-by Asian Lite News UK, July 2nd, 2015



Praying in a Hindu temple, Jamaica



Sadhu, India



Grave of an Indian indentured worker, Jamaica



Gathering of Rastas , Jamaica



Landscape of Saint Thomas Parish, Jamaica



Indian woman indentured worker, Jamaica