On the 18th July 1918 in the village of Mvezo in Umtata, South Africa, a baby was born to the parents - Gadla and Nosekeni. This baby would go on to become arguably, one of the greatest political activists and revolutionaries we have ever known, his name of course was, Nelson Mandela. SLIDE

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Nelson’s name at birth was actually Rolihlala (pronounced Xholilala in the Xhosa language) which, ironically was a colloquial term for ‘trouble maker’. Further, surprisingly, he was born into the Thembu royal family, however due to local customs, his ‘side of the family’ were ineligible to inherit the throne.

In 1939 Mandela began his studies at the University of Forte Hare in Alice on the Eastern Cape, studying English and Politics amongst many subjects on a varied course. He took up ballroom dancing, was active in the drama society and gave Bible classes as part of the Student Christian Association.

At this stage, although Mandela was aware of the African National Congress (ANC), however he avoided any involvement at this time and was in fact a supporter of the British war effort as the Second World War broke out.

In 1943 Mandela continued his study in Law at the University of Witwatersrand as the only black Africa student and was subject to racism there. It was here that he would become increasingly politicised and began marching with the ANC and his activities in the organisation later saw him become a member of its executive committee.

SLIDE

In 1952 Mandela was arrested and found guilty of the crime of ‘statutory communism’ which was a term the government used to describe opposition to Apartheid. He received 9 months imprisonment with hard labours, suspended for 2 years.

For those that may be unaware, apartheid, (which is the Afrikaans word for “apartness”) was the policy that governed relations between South Africa's white minority rule and non-white majority for much of the latter half of the 20th century. The policy was synonymous with sanctioning racial segregation and political and economic discrimination against non-whites.

On the 5th August 1962 police captured Mandela with fellow activists and he was remanded into Johannesburg’s Marshal Square prison (he was later moved to Pretoria so that he could be visited by his wife Winnie). He was charged with the crime of ‘inciting workers to strike’ and on the 12th June, 1964 Mandela was found guilty on this and 3 other charges including conspiracy to overthrow the government. He was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Mandela was to spend the next 18 years internment at the Robben Island prison in Cape Town, where he would spend his days quarrying lime.

In 1982 Mandela was transferred to Pollsmoor prison, he believed that he and his comrades were being isolated to remove their influence on younger activists at Robben Island. He would later contract tuberculosis and was moved again in 1988 to the Victor Verster prison.

SLIDE

By 1989 the then South African president P.W. Botha became ill and was suffering from a stroke. 6 weeks later he was replaced by F.W. de Klerk who believed that apartheid was now unsustainable and with the ‘Free Nelson Mandela’ movement in full swing, later met with Mandela to discuss the situation.

SLIDE

On the 11th February, 1990, after serving a total of 27 years behind bars, Mandela was finally released from prison. Holding his wife’s hand the moment was beamed across the world, he gave a speech declaring his commitment to peace and this was in essence the beginning of the end to apartheid in South Africa.

Nelson went on to become the first black president of the country with his inauguration taking place in Pretoria on the 10th May 1994 – Televised to over 1 billion people globally, he would be president for 5 years until his eventual retirement.

Tragically, Mandela died on the 5th December 2013 at the age of 95 at his home surrounded by his family.

He was a warrior, a revolutionary, a legend.

SLIDE

But wait, this particular story isn’t over. The talk I have planned for you today isn’t actually about Nelson Mandela at all, but about a phenomena that came later.

SLIDE

In 2009 an author by the name of Fiona Broome whilst at a conference talking with others, recalled the tragedy of Nelson Mandela’s death in the late 1980’s whilst he was still in prison. As we have already learned, this was clearly not the case.

It is understood that Broome, was shocked and stunned to learn that these details that she believed to be true were clearly not, but what shocked her more was that over the coming weeks and months, many others would get in touch to describe the exact same details remembering seeing news coverage of his death as well as a speech by his widow, but at a time when Nelson was clearly quite alive. Encouraged by her book publisher, she began her website to discuss what she called the ‘Mandela Effect’ and other incidents like it.

So what is the Mandela Effect?

According to Medical News Today quote “The Mandela effect occurs when a person believes that their distorted memories are, in fact, accurate recollections. They can clearly remember events that happened differently or events that never occurred at all. The bottom line is that the Mandela effect does not involve lying or deception.” Essentially it is the belief that history has somehow changed from how you recall it and this mis-recollection is often experienced by many people on a mass scale.

So let’s have a look at some examples:

I am going to provide you with a few quiz questions for you to contemplate the answers to. You don’t need to write anything down and please don’t shout out if you know the answer. It’s just a bit of fun.

SLIDE EXAMPLES:

So, where does this phenomena come from?

SLIDE

There are many conspiracy theories that have arisen as a result of this phenomena. Some argue that we are actually living in the matrix, others argue that government agencies are slowly but surely attempting to wipe clean our history whilst at the same time implanting new memories into our heads. The greatest conspiracy theory for me though, is that CERN in Switzerland whilst smashing sub atomic particles accidentally flung us into a parallel dimension where everything is ‘almost’ the same.

The actual likely scenario however is somewhere between a mix of false memories and misinformation. Not as spooky, but more rational.

The thing I will leave you with today however is, researching this topic is a bit of fun but it can quite quickly get inside your head. It’s easy to fall for this, as it seems so easily real when in fact, we are human: we are easily lead and easily duped.

SLIDE

I hope you have enjoyed my talk. Please feel free to ask me any questions and if I can I will happily answer them.