NELSON MANDELA'S LIFE STORY

http://youtu.be/t9xtS57534Y

Mandela: She said, 'From today, you are going to be Nelson.'

Narrator: So henceforth, he would be known to the world as Nelson Mandela.

As the son of a chief, Nelson Mandela had access to the best education available to black people in South Africa at the time. Studying at Fort Hare University, where he fast became involved in student protests, his refusal to accept injustice, unfairness and inequality would last him a lifetime.

South Africa, 1941.

In his early-twenties Nelson Mandela moved to Johannesburg where he first encountered the racial discrimination that would later become entrenched in law by the Apartheid government. Working on the mines, then later as a clerk in a law firm, Mandela pursued his law studies and joined the African National Congress, the oldest black political organisation in South Africa.

Mandela: It was when I came to the African National Congress that I realised that Xhosas are only a part of the African people. That the task of the ANC was to unite the African people and out of them, build a nation.

Narrator: In 1948 the Nationalist Government was voted into power by the white electorate in South Africa and the battle lines were clearly drawn.

Mandela: Comrade Oliver said "Well, I like this because we now know we have an enemy in power and I think that we are going to have a better opportunity of mobilising our people".

H.F. Verwoerd: Our policy is one which is called by an Afrikaans word Apartheid, and I'm afraid that has been misunderstood so often. It could just as easily, and perhaps much better, be described as a policy of good neighbourliness.

Apartheid

Narrator: In 1955, the ANC and other organisations called upon people of all races to gather in Kliptown, to approve the Freedom Charter, a blueprint for a free democratic and multi-racial South Africa, in which all races would be treated equally. Nelson Mandela, one of the chief organisers of the gathering, was banned by the government from attending and was forced to watch proceedings from the sidelines.

In 1956, the organisers of the Freedom Charter and other leaders in the Congress movement were charged with high treason. The trial was specifically designed to occupy the opposition and keep them out of politics. It dragged on for four and a half years, and it would be another forty years before the Freedom Charter finally bore fruit.
South Africa, 1960, Sharpeville: A black township in the industrial area south of Johannesburg, a peaceful crowd gathered to protest against the Pass Laws was shot at by police. Sixty nine people died. The Nationalist Government imposed martial law. All opposition was banned and thousands were jailed. When it became clear that all means of peaceful negotiation had been exhausted, Mandela went underground to lead the armed struggle.

**Mandela:** We have made it very clear in our policy that South Africa is a country of many races, there is room for all the various races in this country. There are many people who feel that it is useless and futile for us to continue talking peace and non-violence against a government whose reply is only savage attacks on an unarmed and defenceless people.

**Narrator:** Key government installations were targeted for sabotage. Mandela became known as the 'Black Pimpernel'. In 1962, Mandela was captured, charged with leaving the country illegally and sentenced to imprisonment for five years. Shortly afterwards, his ANC comrades were captured with evidence which incriminated Mandela. He returned to court for the Rivonia trial, where he and eight others faced a possible death penalty.

**Walter Sisulu:** The very speech which was made by Nelson consolidated the spirit of the people outside, because it was a defiant spirit.

**Mandela:** I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve but, if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

**Narrator:** When Nelson Mandela and several of his colleagues were sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964, the political convicts were sent to Robben Island, the bleak island prison off Western Cape Coast. Nelson Mandela was 45 years old when he became prisoner number 466 of 1964. He would be in his early seventies before he would again be a free man. Forced to perform futile hard labour in the mine quarry, the prisoners refused to be broken. Far from being diminished, Mandela’s moral leadership and stature continued to grow while he was in prison.

His young wife, Winnie, continued to be an inspiration to the struggle.

**Winnie Mandela:** That day is not far when we shall lead you to freedom. Amandla! Amandla!

**Narrator:** Amandla! Awethu! Power to the people! But the struggle against Apartheid would continue for another quarter of a century.

While Nelson Mandela and his co-accused served life sentences on Robben Island, other leaders of all races and in all spheres campaigned for change. Many faced imprisonment, or exile, and around the world ordinary people showed their horror of Apartheid and their support for the struggle.

**Hugh Gaitskell MP:** The purpose, friends, of this boycott, is for the people of Britain to register on the widest possible scale their passionate protest against an evil and repulsive doctrine which says that a man’s legal status, a man’s political rights, a man’s economic opportunities, a man’s social position shall depend solely upon the colour of his skin.
Narrator: But in 1976 Soweto school children marched in protest and townships around the country erupted in violence. It was the beginning of the end for Apartheid, but the struggle dragged on for more than a decade as the African Nationalist Government clung to power.

P.W. Botha: I've been lenient and patient. Don’t push us too far.

Narrator: In the late 1980s, amid a tide of world pressure, the South African government was forced to accept the inevitable and began dismantling apartheid.

In 1990, at the age of 71, Mandela was released unconditionally.

Mandela: I stand here before you not as a prophet, but as a humble servant of you, the people. I place the remaining years of my life in your hands.

Narrator: After leading negotiations for a new South Africa, Nelson Mandela cast his vote in the first free and democratic elections and became the country’s first black President.

Mandela: Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another.

Narrator: For the duration of his presidential term, and throughout what should have been a well-earned retirement, he has worked tirelessly to entrench the ideals that he has so long stood for, becoming universally revered as an icon of leadership and humility.

Mandela: When I told one of my advisors a few months ago, that I wanted to retire, he growled at me. Quote: 'You are retired.' If that is really the case, then I should say I now announce, that I am retiring from retirement.

Narrator: But in his retirement from retirement, Nelson Mandela has continued to give his support and generosity in countless ways, creating an enduring legacy through the Nelson Mandela Foundation, the Nelson Mandela Children’s Fund, the Mandela Rhodes Foundation, the Nelson Mandela Institute for Education and Rural Development, and the 46664 Campaign. Through 46664 he continues to lend the full force of his extraordinary talent, intellect and heart, to a problem that faces not only his own country, but the world at large.

Nelson Mandela, Madiba, we salute you.