

**Boys Who Grew  
Up to Change the**



**Muhammad Ali**



**Nelson Mandela**

# Muhammad Ali (1942-2016)





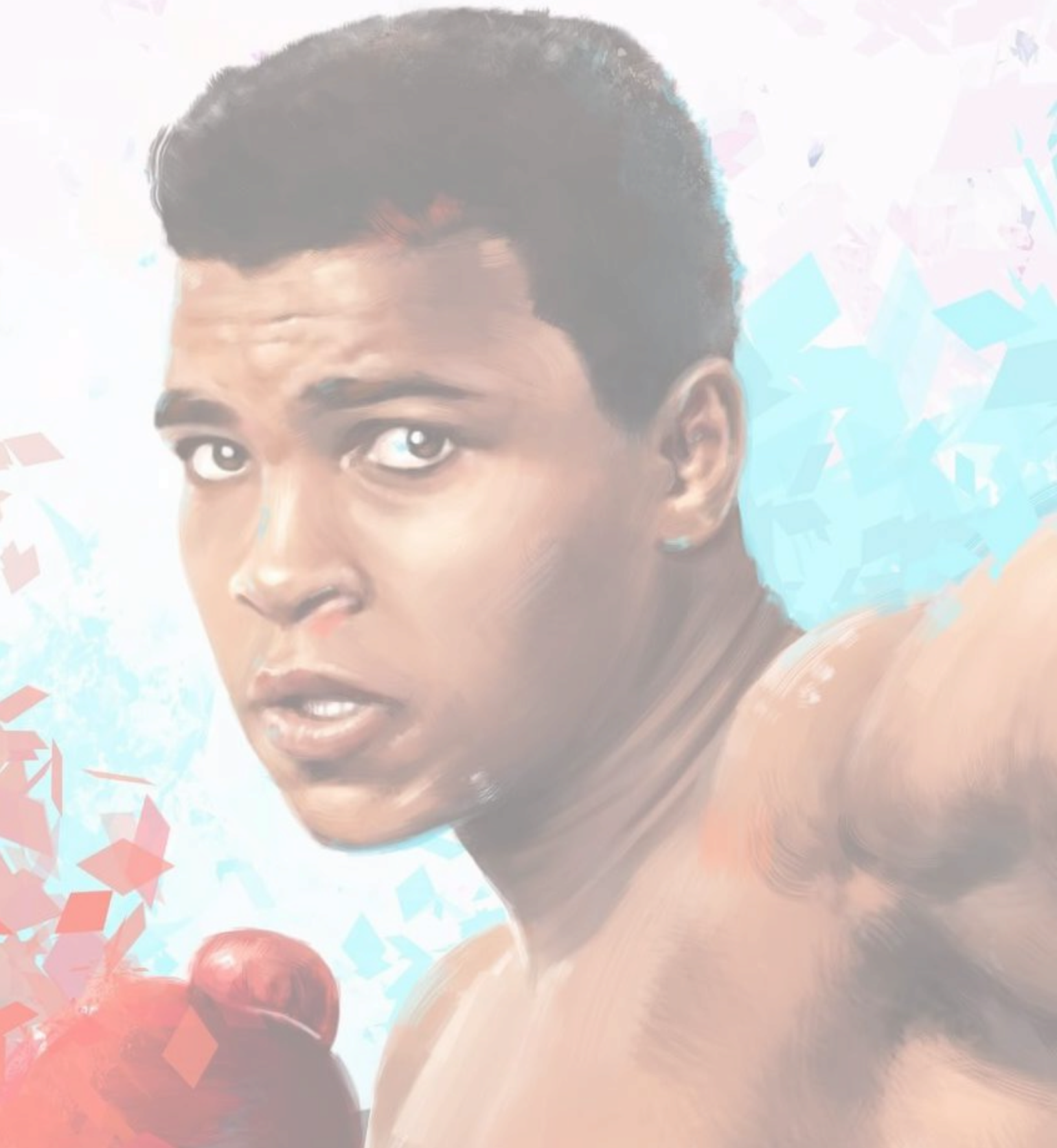
When Muhammad's bike was stolen, he told a policeman that he wanted to fight whoever had done it.

'Well,' said the policeman. 'You should learn how to fight properly before you start challenging people.' It turned out, the policeman trained young boxers at a local gym.

Muhammad signed up.



He proved himself to be committed and talented, and everyone soon knew he'd be a world champion. The more he fought, the more it seemed like no one could beat him.





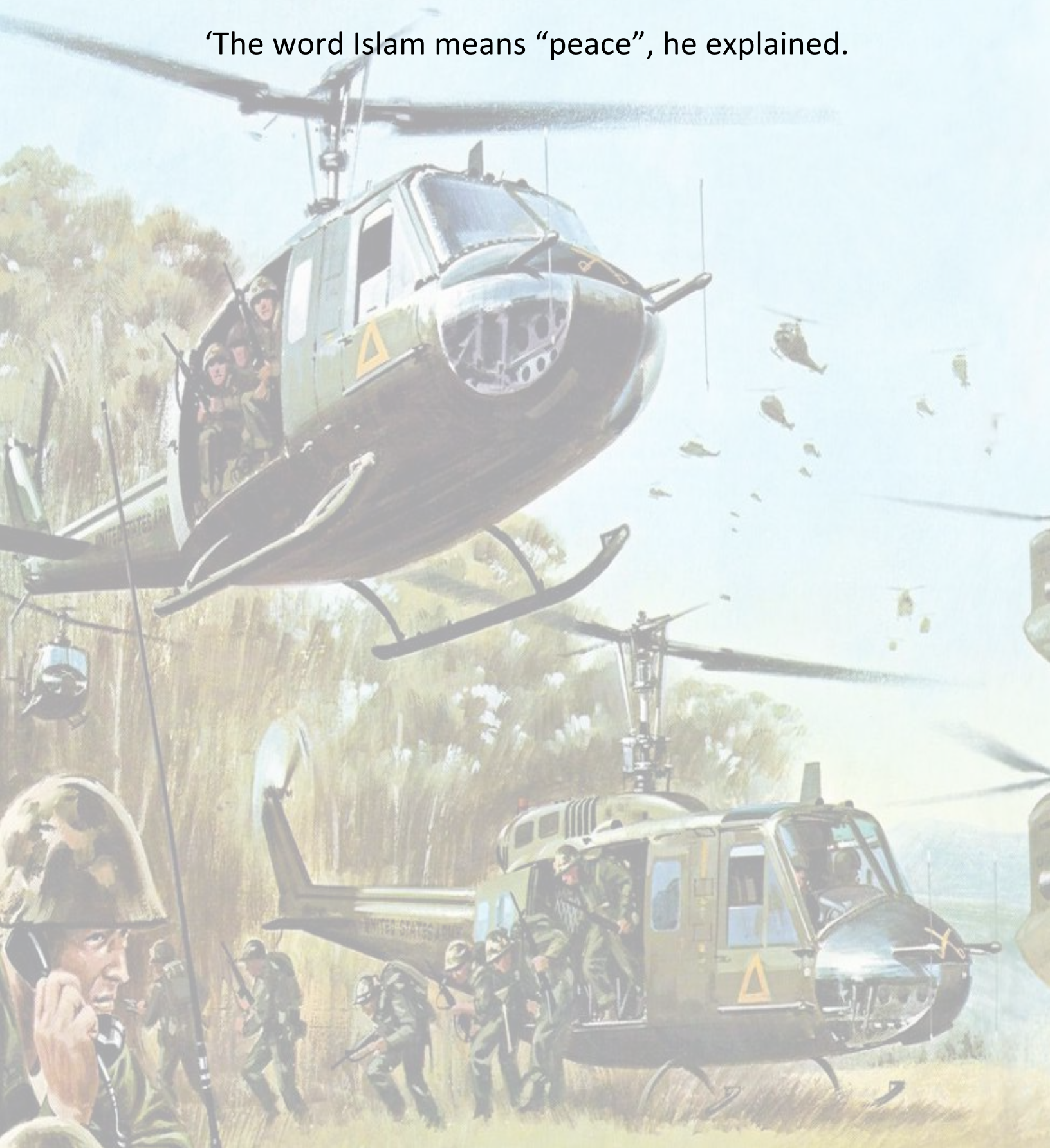
As he got more famous, he got more spiritual too. In 1964, Muhammad changed his religion to Islam. He felt like Christianity had been forced on black people when they were slaves and he wanted a religion of his own.



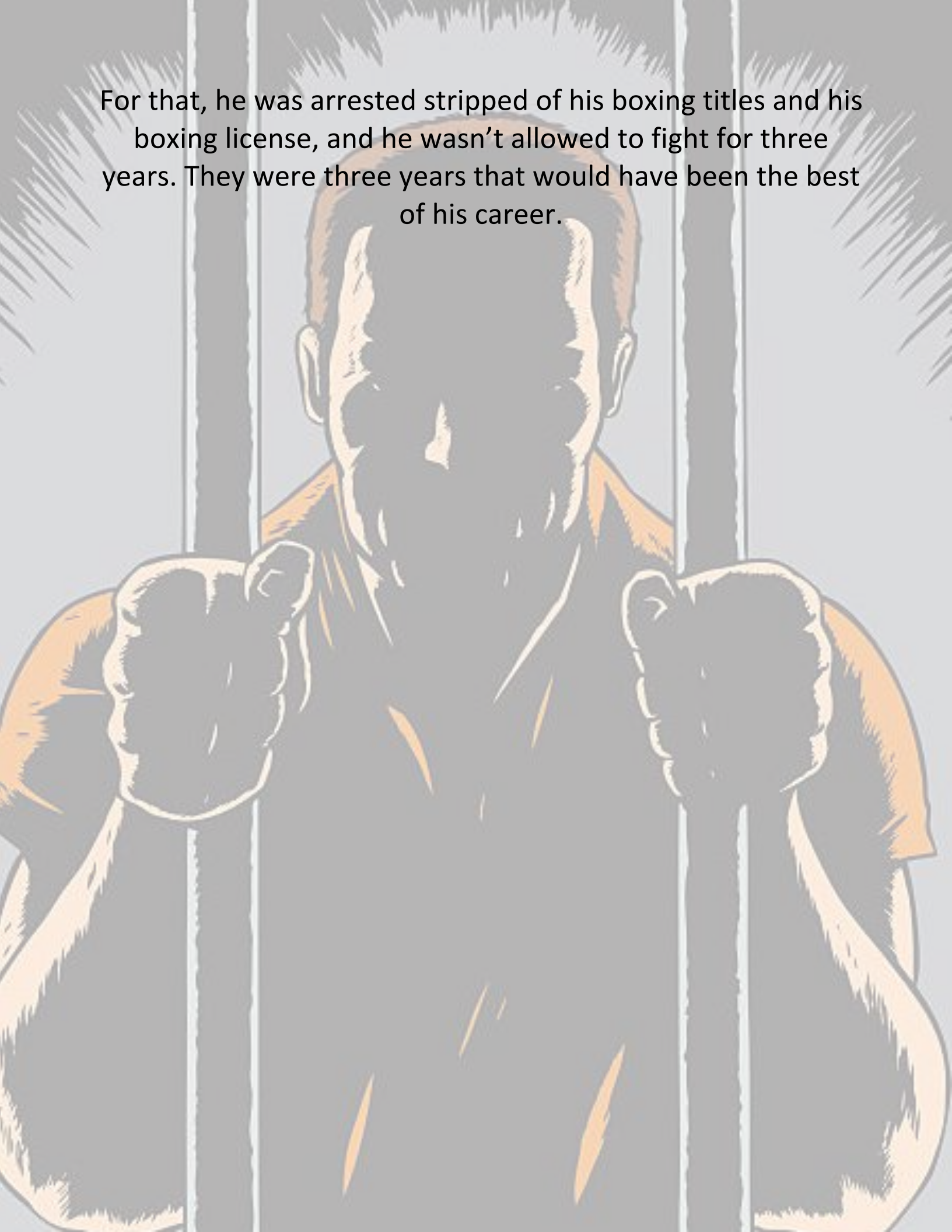


The Vietnam War was taking place at the time, and Muhammad was told he would have to go and fight. Partly because of his religion, he refused.

‘The word Islam means “peace”, he explained.

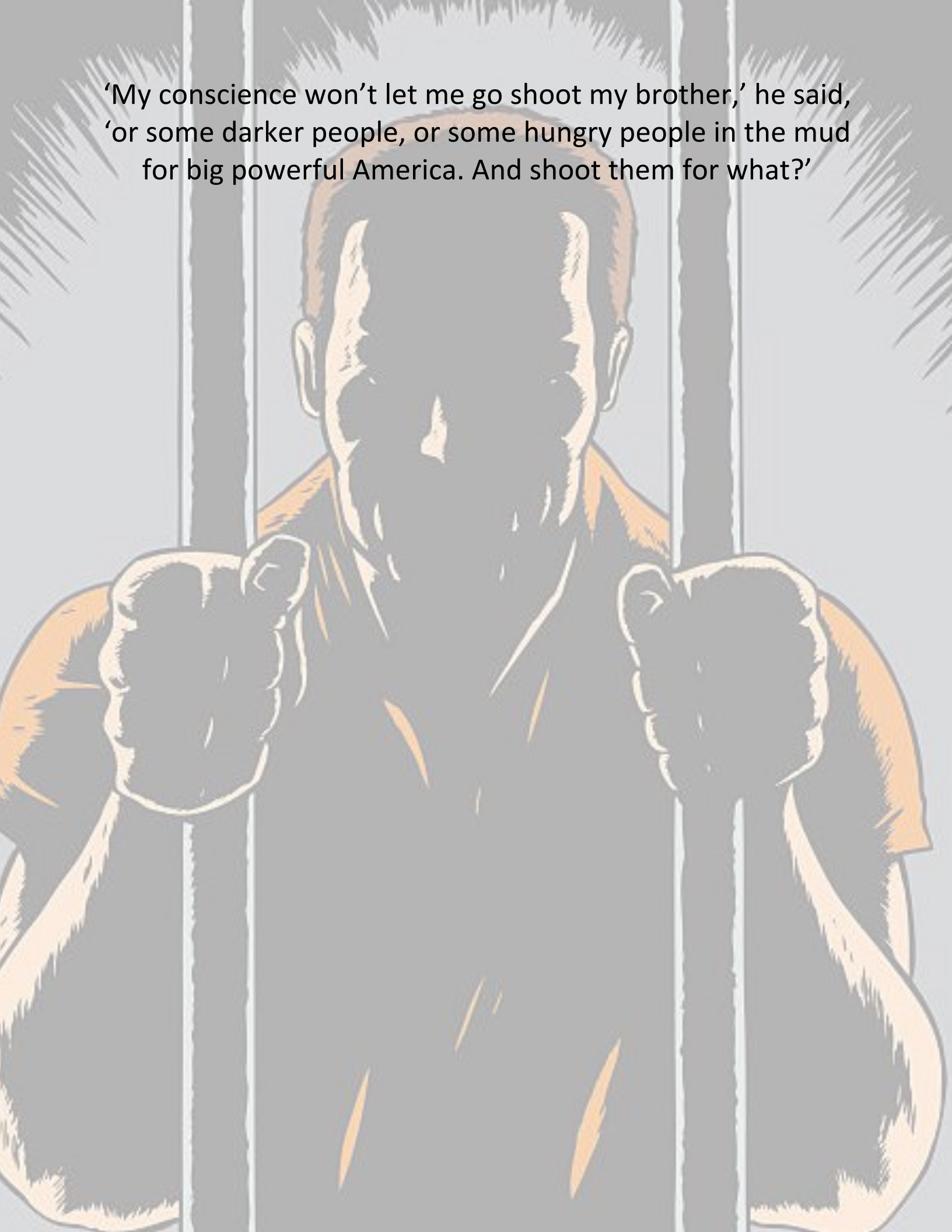


For that, he was arrested stripped of his boxing titles and his boxing license, and he wasn't allowed to fight for three years. They were three years that would have been the best of his career.





‘My conscience won’t let me go shoot my brother,’ he said,  
‘or some darker people, or some hungry people in the mud  
for big powerful America. And shoot them for what?’

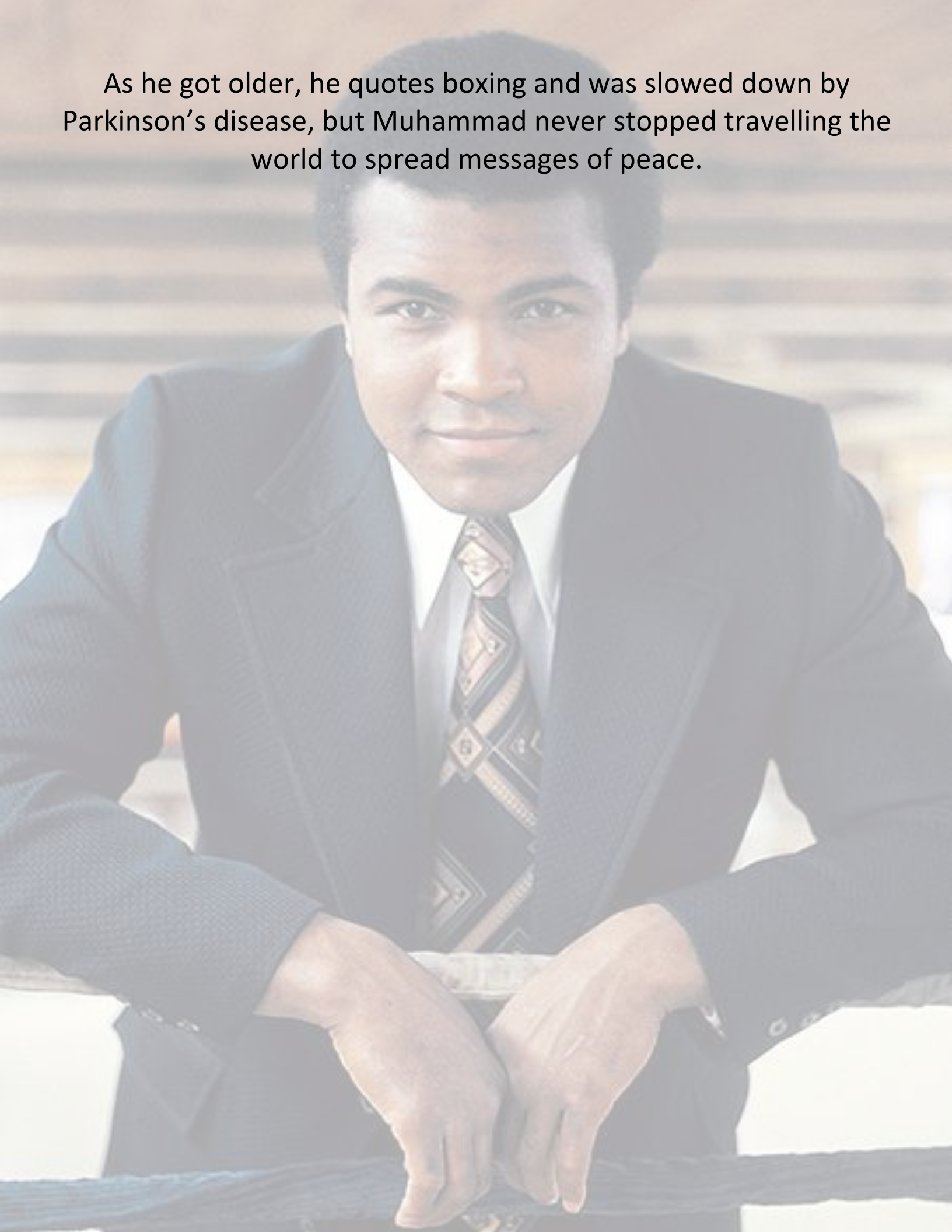




When he finally came back to boxing, Muhammad became the first person ever to win the heavyweight championship three times.



As he got older, he quotes boxing and was slowed down by Parkinson's disease, but Muhammad never stopped travelling the world to spread messages of peace.





# Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)





In the 1600s and 1700s, British and Dutch colonists started arriving in South Africa and taking power, resources and land away from the native black South Africans.



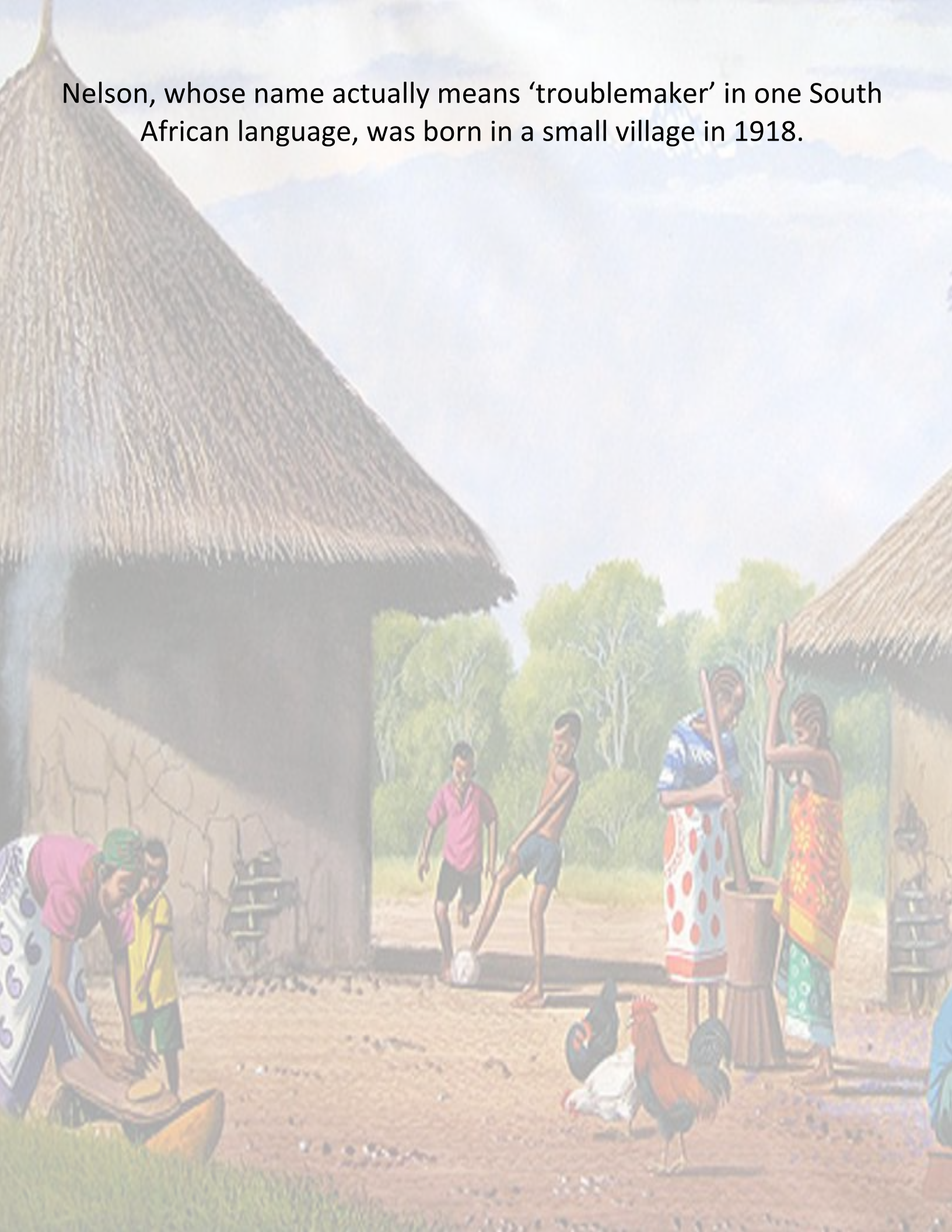


By 1948, white people had control of the government. They didn't let black South Africans vote, interact with people, or even move out of the areas in which they lived.





Nelson, whose name actually means 'troublemaker' in one South African language, was born in a small village in 1918.





He was appalled by the treatment of his people and began joining groups to fight back against it. For doing so, he was kicked out of university.

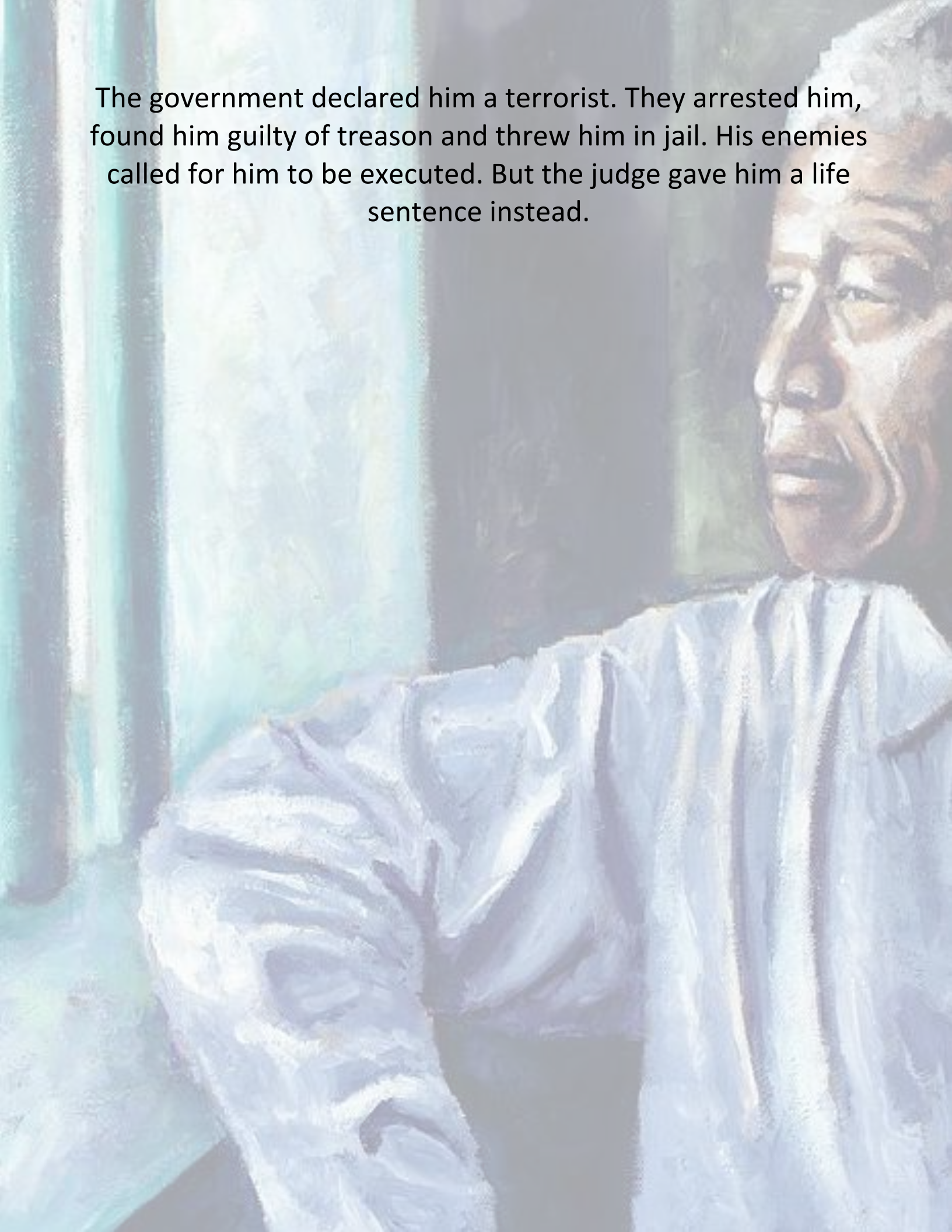


Next, he joined a group called the African National Congress,  
and campaigned with them.



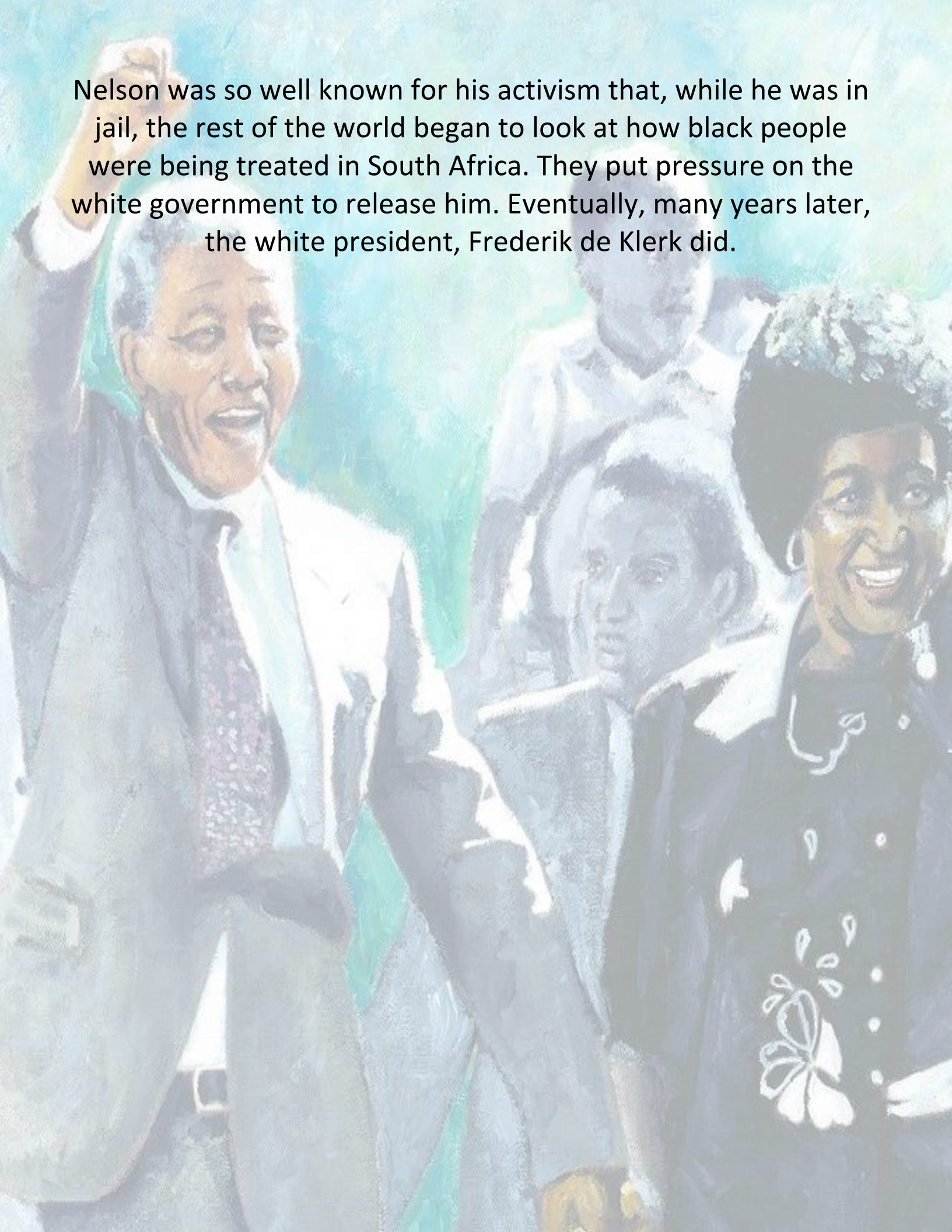


The government declared him a terrorist. They arrested him, found him guilty of treason and threw him in jail. His enemies called for him to be executed. But the judge gave him a life sentence instead.



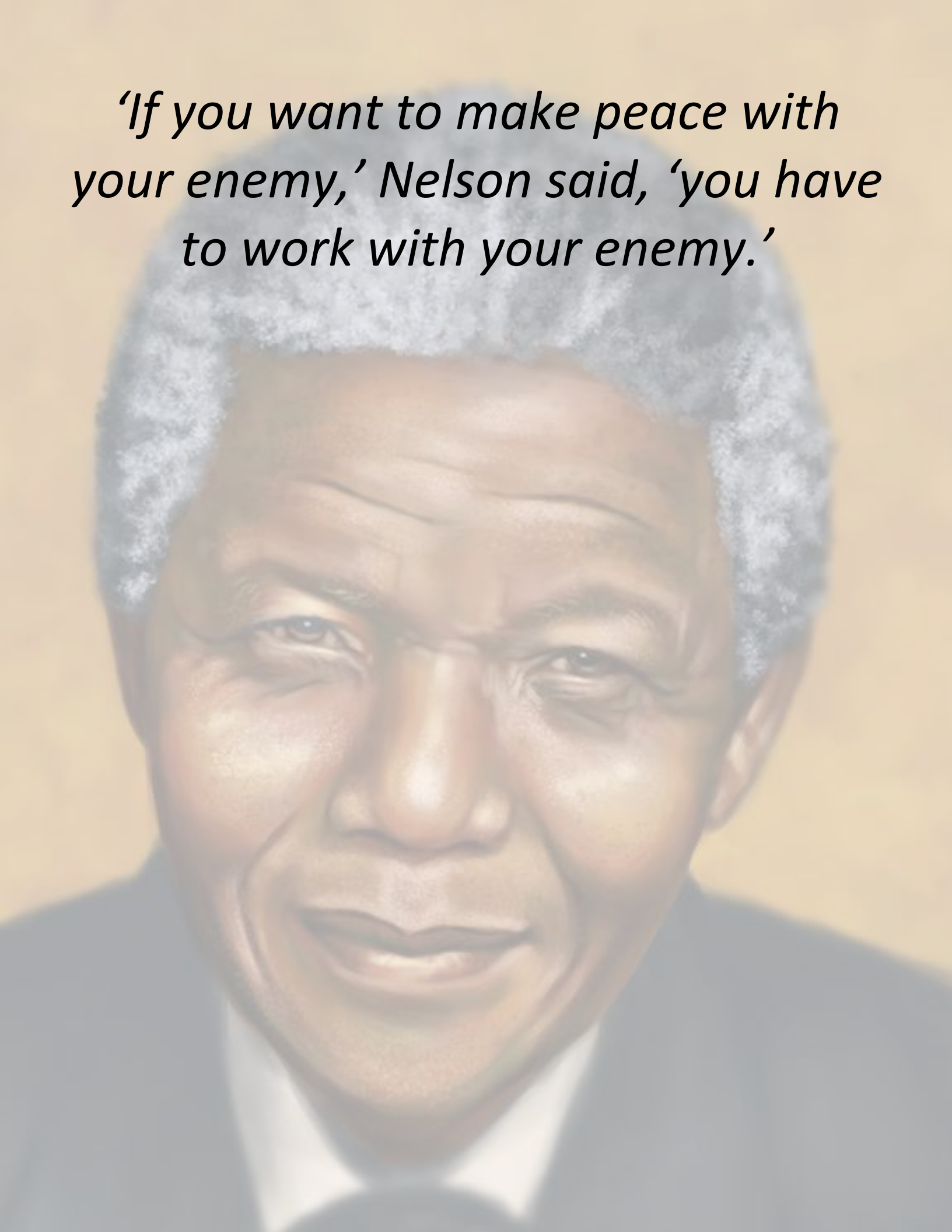


Nelson was so well known for his activism that, while he was in jail, the rest of the world began to look at how black people were being treated in South Africa. They put pressure on the white government to release him. Eventually, many years later, the white president, Frederik de Klerk did.

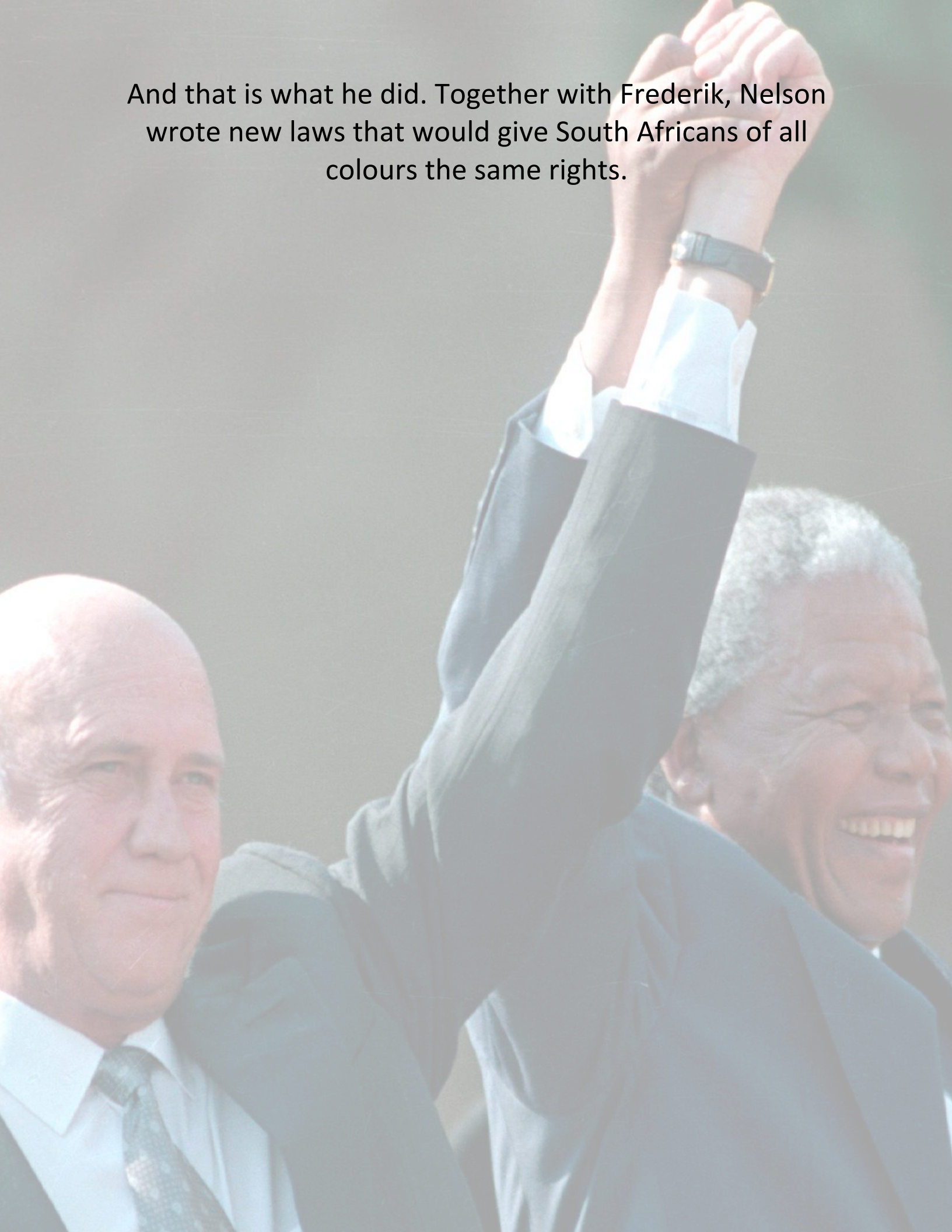




*‘If you want to make peace with your enemy,’ Nelson said, ‘you have to work with your enemy.’*



And that is what he did. Together with Frederik, Nelson wrote new laws that would give South Africans of all colours the same rights.





By 1994, Nelson had gone from spending twenty-seven years in prison, to being his country's first democratically elected president. All that time, he'd never given up hope.





THINK

DIGITAL ACADEMY