

# I remember having mac and cheese at my gran's house

**In a tutorial entitled *The evolution of MEdia*, writing and editing lecturer Gillian Rennie introduced Rhodes University first-year journalism and media studies students to Denis Hirson's *I Remember King Kong (the boxer)* and asked them to write their own *I Remember*, focusing on their personal relationships with the media. This is the edited result of a collective exercise in recollection by 270 students.**

I remember having mac and cheese at my gran's house. I remember our first cell phone; it was yellow and the aerial had to be extended before you could talk. I remember the day I fell in love; I was watching *Men in Black*. I remember Brenda Fassie's death; I was sad because her music was the bomb. I remember leaving my grandmother for the first time.

I remember the day we got DSTV. We didn't have electricity because we lived in the bush so we had to use a generator. I remember *James and the Giant Peach*, and birthday parties at Spur with Chico the Clown ice creams. I remember when Pepsi stopped selling in SA, when there was no SABC 1, 2 or 3, and I remember when Michael Jackson was black. I remember when Spice Girl shoes were in, the sound of the ice cream truck, and Dub on SABC 2. I remember KFC nights with my mother and sister when I'd done something worthy of praise.

I remember middle partings. I remember side path hairstyles. I remember when the bomshaka hairstyle was in; when I did it I looked like an onion. I remember pink and blue hair-rollers piercing my soft scalp. I remember my first bra, the first time I said the F-word, my first high score on Tetris, my first kiss. I remember watching porn for the first time. I remember *Bananas in Pyjamas*. I remember becoming one of those boys my mom warned me about.

I remember when the twin towers came crashing down. I freaked out at school because my aunt was working in New York at the time. I remember coming home on September 11, 2001, and not being able to watch Pokémon because the World Trade Centre was on all channels. I remember sitting on a speech therapist's couch on a Tuesday afternoon, and on TV the first plane was hitting the first tower; I was distracted by my game boy. I remember my birthday,

filled with talks of terror. None of the adults left the sitting room that night. I remember unlocking the bazooka in *Crash Bandicoot Warped*. I remember waking up to milk the cattle with my dad.

I remember Cat Stevens, sandwiches and trips to my grandparents. I remember when we played "Sweet and Sour", the cars with the big red paw of the wildlife sticker were always the friendly drivers.

I remember eating Chicken Licken on my mom's pay day. I remember when a pack of decent cigarettes cost less than R20. I remember seeing Archbishop Desmond Tutu crying on television. I remember staring at the morning paper; it displayed nude photos of Zimbabwean Archbishop, Pius Ncube, and his sensational love affair.

## I remember seeing Archbishop Desmond Tutu crying on television.

I remember the first Indian guy to read news on TV, "Simunye, we are one", and I remember when reality TV was a shocking new concept – we'd crowd around the TV to see who got voted off the island this week. I remember getting up to change the channel, when the news was at 8, the Ricci Lake show every day after school, and being afraid of huge faces from the big screen television. I remember watching that really important cricket match where Jonty Rhodes left his bat behind. I remember Allan Donald dropping his bat and dropping South Africa's Cricket World Cup dreams. I remember watching Hansie Cronje's televised trial when he was tried for match fixing. I remember the news about his death; my mom had a crush on him and was so sad.

I remember Nokia 3310 in grade 7, snake, snake 2! I remember discovering anime in grade 7. I remember when all my friends were rocking the 3310; I got a colour screen Motorola. I remember seeing a picture of my aunt in grade 8; she was the first African girl in Northlands Girls' High. I remember the Zuma rape trial: to say that KZN was chaotic is putting it lightly.

I remember the Spice Girls and Britney Spears; I always wanted to be Baby Spice. I remember the Spice Girls; I wanted to be Posh Spice. I remember seeing a picture of Sydney Poitier holding an Oscar for best actor; it reminded me of what I could become. I remember loving Destiny's Child, being called from washing the dishes to see their *Survivor* video live; I was so inspired. I remember the picture of Cindy Crawford and being influenced by her beauty. I remember seeing Natalie Du Toit winning the gold medal at the Sydney Olympics; it made me believe I could achieve more if I believe in myself.

I remember Princess Diana's wedding and her wedding dress and I remember her death. I remember the day Diana died. It was the day I realised I had a beak for a nose, standing in front of the bathroom mirror before my 4th birthday party. I remember Prince Harry's simple card with the word "Mummy" written on it. I remember I cried because my real life princess had died.

I remember the Y2K virus. I remember the end of the 20th century. I remember the day I found out about HIV; I was only 9 years old.

I remember receiving cassettes from my ballet teacher to play at home. The first part had instructions of how to stand and do the moves, and the second part had piano music. I remember when my grandmother told me that they used to listen to *Unomathothulo* on the radio and they would have only have three programmes a day.

I remember when the streets would be empty of children because Goku was about to pull a Kamehameha on Freiza. I remember *Lady and the Tramp*; I still see them sharing a bowl of spaghetti bolognaise every time I eat or make the meal. I remember watching *Titanic*; I believe in love because of that movie. I remember watching the *Sound of Music*, in awe of how they communicated through telegrams with people far away. I remember how much more personal it was to keep in contact through letters with family living overseas. I remember writing letters to fairies, and I kept writing with no replies. I remember only needing small popcorn at the movies.

**I remember everyone in my world talking about the "new South Africa" and wondering if it was far from the one I was in now.**

I remember my parents going to vote in the first democratic elections. They were gone for hours, my sisters and I ran around the garden and I cut my foot on a yellow broken glass. I remember waiting in a long line with my mother and not knowing what it was for or why she refused to leave. Recently I found a sticker saying, "Vote for Nelson Mandela" that I got from that day. I remember everyone in my world talking about the "new South Africa" and wondering if it was far from the one I was in now.

I remember discovering pink ice-cream; the nurse brought me a bowl after I had my tonsils out. I remember getting toys inside cereal boxes. I remember staying up all night

fully dressed, suitcase packed, wondering if tonight would be the night that the war vets take over our farm and house.

I remember the image of Heath Ledger being wheeled out of his New York apartment on a gurney; my favourite actor dead. I remember the countdown to Mark Shuttleworth's space expedition. Our whole primary school watched it on TV in the media centre. I remember paging through a book of Pulitzer Prize-winning photographs and thinking 'I want to be part of the journalistic world'. I remember watching the televised announcement that the Soccer World Cup would be held in South Africa. My family was together in one place.

**I remember bragging that my life didn't depend on having my phone with me, but that was because I was the only one without MXit.**

I remember *MAD* magazine, reading the *Daily Sun* (the dog's head in the pot), getting *YOU* magazine every week and looking at the back pages for NSYNC, Backstreet Boys, Spice Girls and Five. I remember bragging that my life didn't depend on having my phone with me, but that was because I was the only one without MXit. I remember letting my cell phone fall to the ground during the call when I heard my good friend had died in a car accident.

I remember eating Simba chips everyday to get the Pokémon Tazos and buying the flavours you didn't like for the Tazos you still needed. I remember when I was told that Pokémon was evil. I had to throw away all my Tazos. I remember hearing that a 50-year-old man raped a 9-month-old baby.

I remember the nostalgia as I sat watching France win the soccer World Cup; I remember the nostalgia as I sat in a Paris café watching South Africa win the rugby World Cup. I remember reading that in Germany money was useless, it was used to make fires and I remember being shocked. I remember holding trillions of dollars in my hands that were worthless and thinking, should I make a fire?

I remember the faces of the newly homeless in New Orleans. I remember seeing Marilyn Monroe's picture with the wind blowing her dress up. I remember the famous picture of Nelson Mandela, and the picture of Hector Pieterse being carried.

I remember learning to write my name.