

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**THE WORLD: AN EXTREMELY BRIEF SELECTION OF NOTABLE EVENTS 1976-2008**

**1976**

January—The first commercial supercomputer is released by Cray Research. Boasting a world-record speed of 133 megaflops and an 8 megabyte main memory, the first machine was installed at Los Alamos National Research Laboratory, New Mexico, U.S.A.

April 1—Apple Computer Inc. is formed by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak.

April 16—India institutes The Marriage Act which elevates the minimum age for marriage to 21 years old for men and 18 years old for women in an effort to curb population growth.

June 16—The Soweto uprising, a series of clashes between black youth and South African authorities, begins in South Africa.

July 2—*Gregg v. Georgia*: The Supreme Court of the United States rules that the death penalty is not inherently cruel or unusual and is a constitutionally acceptable form of punishment.

July 18—Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci earns the first of seven perfect scores of 10 at the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal, Canada.

July 28—The Tangshan earthquake in Tangshan, China, kills between approximately 250,000 people and injures an additional 164,000. This along with other political events lead 1976 to be labeled as a “year of curse.” September 9—Mao Zedong, Chairman of the People's Republic of China, dies.

October 19—The United States Copyright Act of 1976 revises copyright terms and codifies doctrine of “fair use.”

December 1—The Sex Pistols achieve public notoriety as they unleash several 4-letter words live on Bill Grundy's TV show, bringing punk to mainstream attention.

**1977**

January 23—*Roots*, a television miniseries based on Alex Haley's best-selling novel about his African ancestors and their lives as slaves, begins its run on ABC.

April 22—Optical fiber is first used to carry live telephone traffic.

April 26—New York's Studio 54 nightclub opens.

May 1—Taksim Square massacre during an international Labor Day rally in Istanbul; 34 people are killed and 126 injured.

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May 17—The right-wing Likud Party, led by Menachem Begin, wins the elections in Israel.

May 25—*Star Wars*, a film directed by George Lucas, is released in the United States.

July 30—Jürgen Ponto, chairman of Dresdner Bank, is shot and killed in an attempted kidnapping by the Red Army Faction (aka Baader-Meinhof Group). This event precipitates German Autumn, characterized by a series of terrorist acts, including murder, kidnap, and the hijacking of the Lufthansa airplane Landshut, and culminating in the collective suicide of several Red Army Faction founders in prison.

September 7—Treaties between Panama and the United States on the status of the Panama Canal are signed; the U.S. agrees to transfer control of the canal to Panama at the end of the twentieth century.

October 14—The Atari 2600 game system is released.

November 8—Harvey Milk is elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors; he is the first openly gay elected official in the U.S.

November 19—Egyptian President Anwar Sadat becomes the first Arab leader to officially visit Israel when he meets with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, seeking a permanent peace settlement.

**1978**

January—The Iranian Revolution begins with first major demonstrations against the Shah.

February 11—The People's Republic of China lifts a ban on works by Aristotle, William Shakespeare, and Charles Dickens.

February 15—Serial killer Ted Bundy is captured in Pensacola, Florida, U.S. after more than two years of evasion.

February 16—The first computer bulletin board system (CBBS) is created in Chicago.

April 22—The One Love Peace Concert is held at National Heroes Stadium in Kingston, Jamaica. Bob Marley unites the leaders of the opposing Jamaican Labour Party and the People's National Party.

May 25—A mail bomb explodes at Northwestern University, the first of 16 attacks by the Unabomber (Theodore John Kaczynski) between 1978 and 1995.

June 15—King Hussein of Jordan marries 26-year-old Lisa Halaby, who takes the name Queen Noor.

June 19—*Garfield*, which eventually becomes the world's most widely syndicated comic strip, makes its debut.

September 17—The Camp David Accords are signed signed by Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, following twelve days of secret negotiations at Camp David, Maryland, U.S.A. The Accords lead directly to the 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty.

October 16—Pope John Paul II succeeds Pope John Paul I as the 264th Pope and the first Polish Pope in history.

December 15—*Superman*, a film directed by Richard Donner, is released in the United States.

#### **1979**

January 7—Vietnam and Vietnam-backed Cambodian insurgents capture Phnom Penh; the Pol Pot regime is removed from power and the Khmer Rouge retreat west to an area along the Thai border.

February 1—Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returns to Tehran, Iran, after nearly 15 years of exile and is greeted by several million Iranians. By April 1, Iran officially becomes an Islamic Republic by a 98% vote in favor.

March 8—Philips publicly demonstrates the Compact Disc.

March—China's One Child Policy is announced in a speech by China's new leader Deng Xiaoping.

May 4—Conservatives win the British general election; Margaret Thatcher becomes the new prime minister.

July 16—Iraqi President Hasan al-Bakr resigns and Vice President Saddam Hussein replaces him.

August 9—Raymond Washington, co-founder of the notorious Los Angeles gang the Crips, one of the largest and most violent street gangs in the United States, is shot and killed.

#### **1980**

January 6 –Global Positioning System time epoch begins at 00:00 UTC.

January 6—Piersanti Mattarella, the President of Sicily, is assassinated by the Mafia.

April 15—The Mariel Boatlift, a mass movement of Cubans from Cuba's Mariel Harbor to the United States over a six-month period, begins.

April 18—Zimbabwe Rhodesia formally regains its independence as Zimbabwe from the United Kingdom; Robert Mugabe becomes Prime Minister.

May 18—Ian Curtis, singer of the band Joy Division, commits suicide.

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May 22—*Pac-Man* video game is released.

June 1—The Cable News Network (CNN) is launched.

September 11—Military dictator Augusto Pinochet calls a national plebiscite to approve a new constitution. The Constitution of 1980 was approved and the plebiscite solidified and increased Pinochet's power for eight years.

September 17 - After weeks of strikes at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk, Poland, the Independent Trade Union Solidarity is established, the first non-communist union.

September 22—Iraq launches a full-scale invasion of Iran, initiating the Iran–Iraq War.

November 21—Millions of viewers tune into the U.S. TV soap opera *Dallas* to learn who shot lead character J.R. Ewing.

December 8—John Lennon of The Beatles is assassinated.

**1981**

January 20—Ronald Reagan is inaugurated as President of the United States, minutes later, Iran releases 52 American hostages by provisions of the previous day's Algiers Accord, brokered by the Algerian government, ending the Iran hostage crisis.

January 25—Jiang Qing “Madame Mao” is sentenced to death in the People's Republic of China.

March 1—Bobby Sands, a member of the Provisional Irish Republican Army, begins a hunger strike in Long Kesh prison (he dies May 5, the first of ten men).

May 6—A jury of architects and sculptors unanimously selects Maya Lin's design for the national Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C, from 1,421 other design submissions.

June 5—The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that five homosexual men in Los Angeles, California, have a rare form of pneumonia seen only in patients with weakened immune systems (the first recognized cases of AIDS).

July 29—Lady Diana Spencer marries Charles, Prince of Wales.

August 1—MTV (Music Television) is launched in the United States.

August 12—The original IBM PC, model 1550, is released in the United States.

September 25—Sandra Day O'Connor becomes the first female Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

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November 23—Ronald Reagan signs the top secret National Security Decision Directive 17 (NSDD-17), authorizing the Central Intelligence Agency to recruit and support Contra rebels in Nicaragua, the start of the Iran-Contra scandal.

December 11—Boxer Muhammad Ali loses to Trevor Berbick in what would be Ali's last-ever fight.

**1982**

March 14—Heavy metal band Metallica plays its first show in Anaheim, California.

May 24—KGB head Yuri Andropov is appointed to the Secretariat of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

June 5—The first Rubik's Cube World Championships is held in Budapest, Hungary.

June 11—*E.T. the Extra Terrestrial*, a film directed by Steven Spielberg, is released in the United States.

September 19—The first emoticons are posted by Scott Fahlman.

October 1—In Orlando, Florida, Walt Disney World opens EPCOT Center.

November 14—The leader of Poland's outlawed Solidarity movement, Lech Wałęsa, is released from eleven months of internment; he is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983.

November 30—Michael Jackson releases *Thriller*, the biggest selling album of all time. The music video for "Thriller," released December 2, 1983, is the most expensive and most successful video of its time.

December 2—61-year-old retired dentist Barney Clark becomes the first person to receive a permanent artificial heart (he lives for 112 days with the device).

**1983**

January 10—Television series *Fraggle Rock*, created by Jim Henson, first airs in the United States.

February 4—American singer Karen Carpenter dies from complications related to her anorexia nervosa, bringing lasting media attention to eating disorders.

February 6—Nazi Klaus Barbie, known as the Butcher of Lyon, is arrested in Bolivia and extradited to stand trial in France.

June 18—Sally Ride becomes the first American woman in space.

July 15—The Nintendo Entertainment System goes on sale in Japan as Family Computer; it is released in the United States, Europe, and Australia in 1985, when it revitalized the industry after the North American

video game crash of 1983.

July 23—In Sri Lanka, over 1,000 Tamil people are killed and tens of thousands of homes destroyed in this full-scale armed conflict between Tamil separatists and the Sinhalese-dominated government of Sri Lanka, marking the beginning of the Sri Lankan Civil War.

September 1—Korean Air Lines Flight 007 is shot down by Soviet jet interceptors when it accidentally strays into prohibited Soviet airspace over the Sea of Japan; all 269 on board are killed.

September 17—Vanessa Williams becomes the first African-American to be crowned Miss America in Atlantic City, New Jersey; she resigns on July 23, 1984, under pressure due to unauthorized nude photos published in *Hustler*.

November 2—U.S. President Ronald Reagan signs a bill creating a federal holiday to honor American civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr.

November 15—The Turkish part of Cyprus declares independence.

November 17—The Zapatista Army of National Liberation is founded in Chiapas, Mexico.

Undated—The Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program is launched in the U.S.

## **1984**

January 22—Apple's "1984" commercial, introducing the Macintosh personal computer, airs during the third quarter of the Super Bowl in the United States.

February 14—British ice dancers Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean score 12 perfect 6.0s for their interpretation of Ravel's Boléro in the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo.

May 1—American comic book *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* is published.

June 6—Indian troops storm the Golden Temple at Amritsar, the Sikhs' holiest shrine, killing an estimated 2,000 people. On October 31, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi is assassinated by her 2 Sikh security guards. Rajiv Gandhi becomes prime minister of India.

June 8—*Ghostbusters*, a film directed by Ivan Reitman, is released in the United States.

September 20—The television series *The Cosby Show* premieres in the United States.

September 26—The United Kingdom and the People's Republic of China sign the initial agreement to return Hong Kong to China in 1997.

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October 5—Bishop Desmond Tutu is awarded Nobel Peace Prize.

Undated—Crack, a smokeable form of cocaine, is first introduced into the Los Angeles area.

**1985**

January 17—British Telecom announces it is going to phase out its famous red telephone boxes.

February 10—Nelson Mandela rejects an offer of freedom from the South African government.

February 20—Minolta releases world's first autofocus single-lens reflex camera.

March 4—The Food and Drug Administration approves a blood test for AIDS, used since then to screen all blood donations in the United States.

March 11—Mikhail Gorbachev becomes General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party and de facto leader of the Soviet Union.

April 10—Madonna begins The Virgin Tour, her first tour, in Seattle, Washington.

July 24—Commodore launches the Amiga personal computer at the Lincoln Center in New York.

September 19—An 8.1 Richter scale earthquake strikes Mexico City. More than 9,000 people are killed, 30,000 injured, and 95,000 left homeless.

October 18—The Nintendo Entertainment System is released in U.S. stores.

November 18—The comic strip *Calvin and Hobbes* debuts in 35 newspapers.

November 20—Microsoft Corporation releases the first version of Windows, Windows 1.0.

December 16—In New York City, Mafia bosses Paul Castellano and Thomas Bilotti are shot dead in front of Spark's Steak House, making hit organizer John Gotti the leader of the powerful Gambino organized crime family.

**1986**

January 19—"Brain," created by two brothers in Pakistan and considered the first computer virus for MS-DOS, begins to spread.

January 28—Space shuttle *Challenger* explodes 73 seconds after takeoff.

February 9—Halley's Comet approaches the inner solar system.

February 26—Prime Minister Olof Palme of Sweden is assassinated.

April 21—Geraldo Rivera opens Al Capone's secret vault on television.

April 26—In Ukraine, a reactor explodes at Chernobyl's nuclear power plant, leading to the worst nuclear disaster in history.

May 25—Hands Across America: at least five million people form a human chain connecting New York City and Long Beach, CA, to raise money to fight hunger and homelessness.

June 11—*Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, a film directed by John Hughes, is released in the United States.

June 23—Eric Thomas develops LISTSERV, the first email list management software.

October 14—Writer and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel is awarded Nobel Peace Prize.

November 3—The Lebanese magazine *Ash-Shiraa* reports that the United States has been selling weapons to Iran in secret, touching off the Iran-Contra Affair.

December 23—Voyager completes the first nonstop circumnavigation of the earth by air without refueling in nine days, three minutes and 44 seconds.

## **1987**

February 22—American artist Andy Warhol dies.

March 9—The Irish rock band U2 releases their studio album *The Joshua Tree*.

April 19—*The Simpsons* cartoon first appears on *The Tracy Ullman Show*.

May 28—Nineteen-year-old West German pilot Mathias Rust evades Soviet air defenses and lands a private plane on Red Square in Moscow.

June 19—*Edwards v. Aguillard*: The U.S. Supreme Court rules that a Louisiana law which requires that creation science be taught in public schools, whenever evolution is taught, is unconstitutional.

October 19—Black Monday: Stock market levels fall sharply on Wall Street and around the world.

December 8—The First Intifada begins in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

December 18—*The Last Emperor* directed by Bernardo Bertolucci wins nine Academy Awards.

December 29—Prozac makes its debut in the United States.

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Undated—Thomas Knoll and John Knoll develop the first version of Photoshop.

Undated—*This Is Your Brain on Drugs*, a public service announcement campaign, is released in the United States.

**1988**

January 1—The Soviet Union begins its program of economic restructuring (perestroika) with legislation initiated by Premier Gorbachev.

April 10—The Great Seto Bridge opens to traffic in Japan.

May 16—A report by U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop states that the addictive properties of nicotine are similar to those of heroin and cocaine.

August 6—*Yo! MTV Raps* premieres on MTV.

August 26—Mehran Karimi Nasseri, "the terminal man", is stuck in the De Gaulle Airport in Paris, where he will continue to reside until August 1, 2006.

October 23—Super Mario Bros. 3 is released in Japan.

November 15—An independent State of Palestine is proclaimed at the Palestinian National Council meeting in Algiers, by a vote of 253-46.

December 16—*Rain Man*, a film by director Barry Levinson, is released in the United States.

**1989**

January 7—The Shōwa period ends with the death of Emperor Hirohito after 62 years and 14 days of his reign in Japan. Akihito becomes Emperor of Japan, beginning the Heisei period the following day.

February 2—Satellite television service Sky Television is launched in Europe.

February 24—Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini places a US \$3-million bounty on the head of *The Satanic Verses* author Salman Rushdie.

March 2—Twelve European Community nations agree to ban the production of all chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) by the end of the century.

March 18—In Egypt, a 4,400-year-old mummy is found in the Great Pyramid of Giza.

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March 24—In Alaska's Prince William Sound the tanker Exxon Valdez spills 240,000 barrels (11 million gallons) of oil after running aground.

April 14—The U.S. government seizes the Irving, CA, Lincoln Savings and Loan Association; Charles Keating eventually goes to jail, as part of the massive 1980s Savings and Loan Crisis.

June 4—The Tiananmen Square massacre takes place in Beijing, China, and the final stand-off in the square is covered live on television.

June 12—The Corcoran Gallery of Art removes Robert Mapplethorpe's photography exhibition, triggering a controversy about the public funding of artworks.

July 5—The television show *Seinfeld* premieres.

August 20—In Beverly Hills, California, Lyle and Erik Menendez shoot their wealthy parents to death in the family's den.

August 23—Two million inhabitants of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, then still occupied by the Soviet Union, join hands to demand freedom and independence, forming an uninterrupted 600 km human chain called the Baltic Way.

November 9—East Germany opens checkpoints in the Berlin Wall, allowing its citizens to travel freely to West Germany for the first time in decades; the next day celebrating Germans from both sides began tearing the wall down.

**1990**

February 11—Nelson Mandela is released from Victor Verster Prison, near Cape Town, South Africa, after 27 years behind bars.

April 20—The Hubble Space Telescope is launched aboard Space Shuttle Discovery.

May 15—*Portrait of Doctor Gachet* by Vincent van Gogh is sold for a record \$82.5 million.

May 17—The World Health Organization removes homosexuality from its list of diseases.

July 26—U.S. President George H.W. Bush signs the Americans with Disabilities Act, designed to protect disabled Americans from discrimination.

August 2—Iraq invades Kuwait, eventually leading to the Gulf War.

October 3—East Germany and West Germany reunify into a single Germany.

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October 4—*Beverly Hills 90210* premieres on the FOX network.

November 13—The first known web page is written.

November 27—Musical group Milli Vanilli admits to lip-synching hits such as “Girl You Know It's True.”

December 1—Establishing the first ground connection between the United Kingdom and the mainland of Europe since the last Ice Age, Channel Tunnel workers from the United Kingdom and France meet 40 metres beneath the English Channel seabed.

**1991**

January 16—Operation Desert Storm begins with air strikes against Iraq.

February 5—A Michigan court bars Dr. Jack Kevorkian from assisting in suicides.

March 15—Douglas Coupland's first novel, *Generation X*, is published in the United States and Canada.

June 17—The South African Parliament repeals the Population Registration Act, which had required racial classification of all South Africans at birth.

June 25—Croatia and Slovenia declare their independence from Yugoslavia.

July 1—The Warsaw Pact is officially dissolved at a meeting in Prague.

July 22—Serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer is arrested after the remains of 11 men and boys are found in his Milwaukee, Wisconsin apartment. Police soon find out that he is involved in 6 more murders.

August 13—The Super Nintendo Entertainment System is released in the United States.

September 19—Ötzi the Iceman is found in the Alps.

September 24—Nirvana releases the album *Nevermind*.

November 7—Los Angeles Lakers point guard Magic Johnson announces that he has HIV, ending his NBA career.

December 31—The Soviet Union officially ceases to exist.

**1992**

January 8—George H. W. Bush is televised falling violently ill at a state dinner in Japan, vomiting into the lap of Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa and then fainting.

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February 7—The Maastricht Treaty is signed, founding the European Union.

April 29—In Simi Valley, California, a jury acquits four Los Angeles Police Department police officers accused of excessive force in the videotaped beating of black motorist Rodney King, causing the 1992 Los Angeles riots and leading to 53 deaths and \$1 billion in damage.

May 19—In Massapequa, New York, Amy Fisher shoots Mary Jo Buttafuoco.

June—*November Rain* by Guns N' Roses enters the world record when it becomes the longest single, at 8 minutes, 57 seconds, to reach the U.S. Top 20.

July 13—Yitzhak Rabin becomes Prime Minister of Israel.

July 22—Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar escapes from prison, fearing extradition to the U.S.

November 3—Bill Clinton defeats incumbent U.S. President George H. W. Bush and businessman H. Ross Perot.

November 11—The Church of England votes to allow women to become priests.

December 3—UN Security Council Resolution 794 is unanimously passed, approving a coalition of United Nations peacekeepers tasked with ensuring humanitarian aid in Somalia.

**1993**

February 28—The U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents raid the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, with a warrant to arrest leader David Koresh on federal firearms violations. Four agents and five Davidians die in the raid and a 51-day standoff begins, later ending on April 19, with a fire that kills 76 people, including David Koresh.

March 11—Janet Reno is confirmed by the United States Senate and sworn in the next day, becoming the first female Attorney General of the United States.

March 12—North Korea announces that it plans to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and refuses to allow inspectors access to nuclear sites.

April 30—The World Wide Web is born at CERN.

May 1—A Tamil Tigers suicide bomber assassinates President Ranasinghe Premadasa of Sri Lanka.

June 23—In Manassas, Virginia, Lorena Bobbitt cuts off the penis of her husband John Wayne Bobbitt.

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June 24—Andrew Wiles wins worldwide fame after presenting his solution for Fermat's Last Theorem, a problem that has been unsolved for more than 3 centuries.

July 19—U.S. President Bill Clinton announces his “Don't ask, don't tell” policy regarding gays in the American military.

September 13—PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shake hands in Washington D.C., after signing a peace accord.

September 26—The first mission in Biosphere 2 ends after two years.

October 5—China performs a nuclear test, ending a worldwide de facto moratorium.

November 17–22—The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) passes the legislative houses in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

**1994**

January 1—The Zapatista Army of National Liberation begins their war in Chiapas, Mexico.

March 27—TV tycoon Silvio Berlusconi's right-wing coalition wins the Italian general election.

April 5—Kurt Cobain, lead singer and guitarist for Nirvana, commits suicide.

April 7—The Rwandan Genocide begins in Kigali, Rwanda.

April 27—South Africa holds its first fully multiracial elections, marking the final end of apartheid. Nelson Mandela is inaugurated as South Africa's first Black president.

June 12—Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman are murdered outside the Simpson home in Los Angeles, California. O.J. Simpson is later acquitted of the killings, but is held liable in a civil suit.

August 5—Groups of protesters spread from Havana, Cuba's Castillo de la Punta (“Point Castle”), creating the first protests against Fidel Castro's government since 1959.

August 25—The television series *My So Called Life* premieres in the United States.

August 31—The Provisional Irish Republican Army announces a “complete cessation of military operations.”

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November 8—Georgia Representative Newt Gingrich leads the United States Republican Party in taking control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate in midterm congressional elections, the first time in 40 years the Republicans secure control of both houses of Congress. George W. Bush is elected Governor of Texas.

December 11—Russian president Boris Yeltsin orders troops into Chechnya.

December 19—The Whitewater scandal investigation begins in Washington, DC.

**1995**

January 1 - The World Trade Organization is established to replace the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

March 20—Members of the Aum Shinrikyo religious cult release sarin gas on five subway trains in Tokyo, killing 12 and injuring 5,510.

March 31—Tejano superstar Selena is killed by the president of her own fanclub, Yolanda Saldívar.

April 19—Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols carry out the Oklahoma City bombing: 168 people, including 8 Federal Marshals and 19 children, are killed at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. McVeigh was later executed by lethal injection on June 11, 2001. Nichols was sentenced to life in prison.

May 14—The Dalai Lama proclaims 6-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the 11th reincarnation of the Panchen Lama.

July 28—*Kids*, a film directed by Larry Clark, is released in the United States.

August 6—Ceremonies in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Washington, D.C., and Tokyo mark the 50th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb.

September—The DVD, an optical disc computer storage media format, is announced. eBay is founded. Sony releases the PlayStation video-game console in the United States.

November 4—Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated at a peace rally in Tel Aviv.

November 21—The Dow Jones Industrial Average gains 40.46 to close at 5,023.55, its first close above 5,000. This makes 1995 the first year where the Dow surpasses 2 millennium marks in a single year.

November 22—The first full-length computer-animated feature film, *Toy Story*, is released in the United States.

**1996**

January 29—Fire destroys La Fenice, Venice's famed opera house.

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February 10—Chess computer “Deep Blue” defeats world chess champion Garry Kasparov.

February 19—Close to one million people, including Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, participate in a silent march in Madrid against recent terrorist attacks committed by the ETA.

March 20—The British Government announces that Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (a.k.a. “Mad Cow disease”) has been likely transmitted to people.

July 5—Dolly the sheep, the first mammal to be successfully cloned from an adult cell, is born at the Roslin Institute in Midlothian, Scotland.

August 6—NASA announces that the ALH 84001 meteorite, thought to originate from Mars, contains evidence of primitive life forms.

August 23—Osama bin Laden writes “The Declaration of Jihad on the Americans Occupying the Country of the Two Sacred Places,” a call for the removal of American military forces from Saudi Arabia.

September 13—American rapper Tupac Shakur dies from gunshot wounds.

December 13—Kofi Annan is elected by the United Nations Security Council the next Secretary General of the United Nations.

December 26—JonBenét Ramsey, age 6, is murdered in the basement of her parents' home in Boulder, Colorado.

**1997**

January 27—It is revealed that French museums were in possession of nearly 2,000 pieces of art that had been stolen by Nazis.

March 9—American rapper Notorious B.I.G. is shot dead while sitting in the passenger seat of a car after a Soul Train Awards party.

March 22—The comet Hale-Bopp makes its closest approach to Earth.

March 30—The Spice Girls launch Britain's new television channel, Channel 5.

April 22—A 126-day hostage crisis at the residence of the Japanese ambassador in Lima, Peru ends after government commandos storm and capture the building, rescuing 71 hostages.

May 15—The United States government acknowledges existence of the “Secret War” in Laos, and dedicates the Laos Memorial in honor of Hmong and other “Secret War” veterans.

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June 16—Radiohead releases the album *OK Computer*.

July 10—In London, scientists report their DNA analysis findings from a Neanderthal skeleton, which support the out of Africa theory of human evolution, placing an "African Eve" at 100,000 to 200,000 years ago.

August 1—Candace Bushnell's essay collection *Sex and the City* is released.

August 31—Diana, Princess of Wales, is taken to a hospital after a car crash shortly after midnight, in the Pont de l'Alma road tunnel in Paris, and later dies. Her funeral is watched by over 2 billion people worldwide.

September 5—Mother Theresa of Calcutta dies of heart failure in Kolkata, India.

November 12—Ramzi Yousef is found guilty of masterminding the World Trade Center 1993 bombings.

December 19—*Titanic*, a film directed by James Cameron, is released in the United States.

December 29—Hong Kong begins to kill all the chickens within its territory (1.25 million) to stop the spread of a potentially deadly influenza strain.

**1998**

January 26—At a White House press conference, President Clinton says "I'm going to say this again: I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky."

February 20—To prevent military action by the United States and Britain, President Saddam Hussein of Iraq negotiates a deal with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, allowing weapons inspectors to return to Baghdad.

May 18—The United States Department of Justice and 20 U.S. states file an antitrust case against Microsoft.

July 5—Japan launches a probe to Mars, joining the United States and Russia as an outer space-exploring nation.

July 10—The Diocese of Dallas, Texas, agrees to pay \$23.4 million to nine former altar boys who claim they were sexually abused by former priest, Rudolph Kos.

August 7—The bombings of the United States embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya, kill 224 people and injury over 4,500.

September 2—A United Nations court finds Jean-Paul Akayesu, the former mayor of a small town in Rwanda, guilty of 9 counts of genocide, marking the first time that the law against genocide has been enforced.

September 7—Two Stanford University Ph.D. candidates, Larry Page and Sergey Brin, establish Google.

October 13—NATO has authorized air strikes against the Serbs in response to events in Kosovo. After more than a week of negotiations, U.S. diplomat Richard Holbrooke secures the "October Agreement," leading to a cease-fire, and the withdrawal of Serb troops from Kosovo.

October 6—Gay college Student Matthew Shepard is found severely beaten and tied to a fence near Laramie, Wyoming. He dies October 12, becoming a symbol of hate-crime victims and sparking public reflection on homophobia in the U.S.

November 9—Britain abolishes the death penalty.

December 19—In a vote largely along party lines, the U.S. House of Representatives impeaches President Clinton on charges of lying under oath to a federal grand jury and obstructing justice.

## **1999**

Jan 1— The euro is introduced to world financial markets as an accounting currency.

February 2—Hugo Chávez becomes President of Venezuela.

February 23—White supremacist John William King is found guilty of kidnapping and killing African-American James Byrd Jr. by dragging him behind a truck for three kilometers.

Mar 24-31—In Kosovo, Serb police knock on doors and tell people they must leave. A mass exodus of ethnic Albanians (Kosovars) begins, later to be described as ethnic cleansing on a massive scale. In the following week the long line of Kosovars were attacked by thieves and rapists.

April 20—Two Littleton, Colorado, teenagers, Eric Harris and Dylan Kibold, open fire on their classmates and teachers at Columbine High School, killing 12 students and 1 teacher.

May 29—Cathy O'Dowd, a South African mountaineer, becomes the first woman to summit Mount Everest from both the north and south sides.

July 25—Lance Armstrong wins his first Tour de France.

September 23—In the Russian city of Ryazan, a bomb planted in an apartment building is found and defused. Chechens are blamed for the bombings. Yeltsin orders aircrafts to bomb the capital of Chechnya, and the Second Chechen War begins.

October 12—According to the United Nations, world population reaches six billion—up from four billion in 1974 and three billion in 1959.

November 25—Fishermen rescue Elián Gonzalez, a five-year-old boy clinging to an inner-tube three miles off the coast of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. His mother and eleven others fleeing Cuba had drowned.

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After being released into the custody of an uncle in Miami. Elián is later forcibly taken in an INS raid and returned to his father in Cuba.

December 31—The U.S. turns over complete administration of the Panama Canal to Panama, as stipulated in the 1977 Torrijos-Carter Treaty.

December 31—Yeltsin announces that he is resigning as Russia's president. This leaves Vladimir Putin as "acting president."

**2000**

January 1—Millennium celebrations take place throughout the world. Some lived in fear of the "Y2K" bug; a computer bug resulting from the practice in early computer program design of representing the year with two digits and that long-working systems could break down when the "...97, 98, 99..." ascending numbering assumption suddenly became invalid.

April 25—The U.S. State of Vermont legalizes civil unions for same-sex couples.

May 11—The Billionth person living in India is born.

July 2—Vicente Fox is elected President of Mexico, ending 71 years of rule by the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional).

November 7—In U.S. presidential elections, Al Gore wins the popular vote, but the vote is close in Florida, where a win by Bush will give him the electoral votes he needs to win the presidency. Bush's margin of victory has dwindled to about 500 votes, narrow enough to trigger a mandatory recount.

December 12—The U.S. Supreme court rules 7-2 supporting a Republican challenge that Florida Supreme Court's scheme for recounting ballots is unconstitutional, and the Supreme Court rules 5-4 to end the Florida recount. George Bush becomes the official winner in Florida and the 44<sup>th</sup> U.S. President.

**2001**

January 8—Noah, a gaur, is born, the first individual endangered species to be cloned.

February 12—The Human Genome Project international consortium announces the publication of an analysis of the human genome: a blueprint of the sequence of the three billion chemical letters embodied in genetic heredity.

February 20—The UK "foot and mouth" disease crisis begins.

April 1—Former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia President Slobodan Milošević surrenders to police to be tried on charges of war crimes.

June 1—Crown Prince Dipendra of Nepal kills his father, the King, his mother and other members of the royal family with an assault rifle and then shoots himself in the Nepalese royal massacre.

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September 11—Almost 3,000 are killed in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and in rural Shanksville, Pennsylvania after American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175 crash into the World Trade Center's Twin Towers, American Airlines Flight 77 crashes into the Pentagon, and United Airlines Flight 93 crashes into a grassland in Shanksville.

September 18—The 2001 anthrax attacks commence as letters containing anthrax spores are mailed from Princeton, New Jersey to ABC News, CBS News, NBC News, the New York Post, and the National Enquirer. 5 are killed and 17 others fall ill.

October 26—U.S. President George Bush signs the USA Patriot Act into law, expanding the definition of terrorism and allowing the U.S. government to carry out widespread and unchecked surveillance and intelligence gathering.

November 22—Pope John Paul II sends the first papal e-mail from a laptop in his office.

December 27—The People's Republic of China is granted permanent normal trade status with the United States.

**2002**

January 29—In his State of the Union address, President Bush makes his “axis of evil declaration” disparaging the governments of North Korea, Iraq, and Iran, among others.

January 31—In Pakistan, Daniel Pearl, reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*, is murdered by his kidnapers.

February 12—The United Nations war crimes trial of Yugoslavia's Slobodan Milošević, begins at the Hague in Belgium.

March 7—In the Antarctic over the preceding 35 days, the Larson-B Ice Shelf, over 3,250 square kilometers, brakes apart as a result of global warming.

October 26—Vice President Cheney says to the Veterans of Foreign Wars: “Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt that he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies and against us.”

October 26—Opposition to the war in Iraq is organized into demonstrations in Europe, Latin America, Australia, Japan, and the United States.

Nov 24—After three days of rioting that left 105 dead, the Miss World beauty pageant moves from Nigeria to Britain. The riots began as a reaction to an article in a local newspaper describing the possibility of the Prophet Muhammad, were he alive, marrying one of the pageant contestants.

### **2003**

January 13—President Bush summons Secretary of State Colin Powell to the Oval Office and tells him that he has decided to go to war against Iraq.

January 24—The new United States Department of Homeland Security begins operation, charged with the responsibility of protecting U.S. territory from terrorist attacks and natural disasters.

March 20—U.S., British, Australian, and Polish troops invade Iraq.

April 25—The Sudan Liberation Movement and Sudanese Liberation Army (SLM/SLA) attack a sleeping garrison at al-Fashir, a city in the Darfur region, and destroy seven helicopter gun ships and kill 75 pilots, soldiers and technicians.

October 24—The Concord makes its final commercial flight.

December 13—Saddam Hussein is captured by American troops.

### **2004**

February 3—The CIA in the U.S. admits that there was no imminent threat from weapons of mass destruction before the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

February 4—Facebook was founded in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

April 28—Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse in Iraq is revealed on the US television show 60 Minutes.

April 29—The last Oldsmobile rolls off of the assembly line.

May 1—Ten additional states become members of the European Union: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia. The European Union will now be China's largest trading partner.

May 12—An American civilian contractor in Iraq, Nick Berg, is shown being decapitated by a group allegedly linked to al-Qaida on a web-distributed video.

October 8—Martha Stewart begins serving a 5-month sentence for insider trading.

November 2—Film director Theo van Gogh is murdered in Amsterdam by Mohammed Bouyeri.

November 2—President Bush wins re-election in the U.S. The Republican Party extends its majorities in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

November 11—Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian National Authority, dies.

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December 26—An earthquake of 9.3 magnitude generates a tsunami that crashes into coastal areas of Thailand, India, Sri-Lanka, the Maldives, Malaysia, Burma, Bangladesh, and Indonesia. The deaths are to be tolled at 186,983 and 40,000 plus are to remain missing.

December 31—The tallest building in the world, at 509 meters (1,670 feet) opens in the city of Taipei.

**2005**

February 16—The Kyoto Protocol, an international environmental treaty, goes into effect, without the support of the United States and Australia.

January 23—Famed American television host Johnny Carson dies.

April 1—*Popular Science* publishes an article that describes the Army Corps of Engineers as considering a new levee system for New Orleans capable of holding back a surge from a category 5 hurricane but that “it may be decades before the new barriers are completed.”

April 2—Pope John Paul II dies.

June 30—Spain joins Belgium and the Netherlands in permitting same-sex marriage.

August 29—Hurricane Katrina strikes the Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama coasts. Over 2,000 people die and thousands more are displaced and their homes destroyed.

October 8—An earthquake in Kashmir kills over 80,000 people.

October 19—In Iraq the trial of Saddam Hussein begins.

October 26—Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, attends a “World Without Zionism” conference. He calls for Israel to be “wiped off the map” and condemns the peace process.

November 30—Surgeons in France carry out the first human face transplant.

**2006**

January 22—Evo Morales becomes Bolivia's first indigenous head of state since the Spanish Conquest. He was a leader among fellow campesinos and opposed to U.S. efforts to eradicate coca growing.

January 25— Hamas becomes a majority in the Palestinian Legislative Council.

February 26—World population is calculated at 6.5 billion.

March 26— In Scotland, smoking is banned in public bars and restaurants.

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June 3—Montenegro, formerly a part of Yugoslavia, becomes independent.

August 24—The US Federal Drug Administration approves nonprescription behind-the-counter pharmacy access to Plan B (or “the morning after pill”) for women 18 or older.

September 20—Chávez of Venezuela delivers a speech to the UN General Assembly and refers to President Bush as “the devil.”

October 26—President Bush signs into law the Secure Fence Act, which calls for the building of 700 miles of fence along the U.S. Mexican border. The bill is passed by a large majority in the House and Senate.

November 18—The Chinese government blocks access to Wikipedia, less than one week after access had been allowed.

December 30—Saddam Hussein curses “traitors!” to the United States and Iran, and is hanged.

**2007**

January 9—Apple Inc. announces and introduces the highly speculated iPhone at the 2007 Macworld Conference & Expo.

January 19—Israel releases \$100 million in frozen assets to President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian National Authority, in order to bolster the president's position.

February 3—The deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu is found at a Bernard Matthews’s turkey farm in Suffolk, England.

February 15—A UNICEF report concludes that the Netherlands is the country that provides the best well-being for children. Sweden is second.

April 16—Thirty-two people are killed by college student Seung-Hui Cho in the Virginia Tech massacre in Blacksburg, Virginia.

June 2— Egypt’s Health Ministry announces the abolition of female circumcision.

July 21—The final book of the Harry Potter series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, is released and sells over 11 million copies in the first 24 hours, becoming the fastest selling book in history.

October 8—Track and field star Marion Jones surrenders her five Olympic medals she won in the 2000 Sydney Games, after admitting to doping.

November 5—The Writers Guild of America goes on a strike that lasts until February 12, 2008.

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December 27—Benazir Bhutto is assassinated. She was the first woman elected to lead a Muslim state and Pakistan's first and only Prime Minister.

**2008**

January 2—Price of petroleum hits \$100 per barrel for the first time in history.

January 21—Stock markets plunge around the world amid growing fears of a U.S. recession, fueled by Mortgage crisis.

February 15—Data from the United Nations suggest that 75% of crop varieties in the world have become extinct in the last one hundred years.

February 24—Fidel Castro resigns as President of Cuba. The National Assembly unanimously elects his brother Raul Castro.

March 7—The BBC reports that an estimated one in three persons in the world is infected by tuberculosis, predominantly among the poor in the "developing" world.

March 19—Croatia, Hungary, and Bulgaria announce that they will recognize the independence of Kosovo.

May 3—A cyclone hits Burma/Myanmar with a death toll over 133,000.

May 29—More than 100 countries, including Britain, approve a ban on cluster bombs. Not joining the agreement is Russia, China, Israel, India, Pakistan, and the United States.

August 7—The South Ossetia war begins as Georgia and Russia launch a major offensive into the separatist region of South Ossetia after days of border skirmishes between the two sides.

August 27—The Democratic Party nominates Barack Obama as their candidate for U.S. President.

November 4—Barack Obama wins 365 electoral votes, becoming the first African-American President of the United States.

November 26—Coordinated shooting and terrorist bombing attacks in Mumbai, India, kill 195 people over the course of 3 days.

December 6—In Greece, after a policeman kills 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos, the country erupts in widespread riots.