1991 A Disasterous Year Essay, Research Paper

circumstance across the country may not affect you personally, but it can affect your thoughts or views on a particular subject. No year is flawless, happy times and tragedies create a roller coaster in which the world has no choice but to ride out the twists and turns. But 1991 seemed to be a “plague” year, where the bad seemed to far outweigh the good in every possible way. The entire world was affected by tragedy? but the United States seemed to be hit the hardest of all by mishaps. During the year of 1991, the United States felt the heart- ache of a war, became very aware of a deadly disease, heard accusations brought to a public official, saw exactly how gruesome some people in this world can be, and watched the brutality of two different riots. The year of 1991 may not stand out in many people’s minds compared to 1912 or 1963? but as I look back to 1991, I see building blocks being laid. Many of those building blocks have been transformed into problems we now see everyday. Now, I am not saying that the year was all bad, but it was a long 365 days that catered to violence, public humiliation , and death.

The year began with a bang…literally. The Gulf War was launched by Operation Desert Storm on January 16, in Baghdad, Iraq. The United States and allied forces opened a long threatened war to drive President Saddam Hussein’s army from Kuwait(Rosenthal 15). The United States remembered our troops overseas by wearing yellow ribbons. The yellow ribbons were seen all over the nation to show America’s support and love for the troops. The world was also captivated by the leadership of General Norman Schwarzkopf and the entire Desert Storm team. General Schwarzkopf said, “I was totally unprepared for the scene and the first thing that flashed through my mind was that if I ever visualized what hell would look like, this was it”(Cohen-Gatti 303). But “Stormin Norman,” as he came to be called had come to accomplish something? and he did. The Gulf War ended on February 27, 1991 with Kuwaits liberation from Iraq. There were 141 servicemen killed and 472 were injured. The United States grieved for the lost and wounded men and women who gave their life for our country.

The AIDS virus reared its ugly head in 1991 with the death of two of our own. Freddie Mercury, 45, the lead singer of the popular British band Queen died on November 24(Ressner 13). It was just one day after his own admitting of the disease. Mercury was an avowed bisexual. The world was also shocked when Earvin “Magic” Johnson, a three time, most valuable player in the NBA announced that he too had been infected with the AIDS virus. His announcement really hit close to home because he was so widely popular and he had obtained the disease through a heterosexual relationship. After dazzling fans for twelve years, the 32 year old made plans to retire from the Los Angeles Lakers and devote his time to campaigning for AIDS awarenness. These AIDS cases were not the first, but it really “woke-up” the nation, and made everyone realize how prevalent the fatal disease was becoming.

Clarence Thomas, a federal appeals court judge, was accused and convicted of sexual harassment in the rocky year of 1991. Anita Hill, a law professor, accused Thomas of sexually harassing her while she worked for him. During the nationally televised hearings, Thomas was passionate, eloquent, and outraged that anyone would accuse him of such a crime. Hill was calm, deliberate, and restrained. The Thomas-Hill hearings provoked wide, heated and unresolved discussions about the Senate’s role in confirming judges about the sexual politics of succesful black women, and about the political ethics of both Thomas’s and Hill’s supporters(Dworkin 29). This instance made the nation realize that the people we were electing to office were not as honorable and trustworthy as we would like to think.

Murders in the United States are fairly common and frequent. The year of 1991 was no exception. Yet, the Jeffrey Dahmer murders that occured in 1991 were of quite a different nature. The world was mortiifed of the brutality that one man could commit. Dahmer, a convicted child molester and a Milwaukee chocolate factory worker admitted to the killings of 17 young men(Matthews 44). The world associated Dahmer with diememberment and cannabilism of all his victims, which were mostly homosexual black men. Dahmer’s apartment contained severed heads, rotting body parts, and evidence of cannibalism (Dahmer 70). Jeffrey Dahmer’s murders showed exactly how grotesque and sick some people in this world really are. Dahmer’ s crime became the most publicized murder scandal ever.

Riots played a major part in the year of 1991. Dissension between races was quite evident because both of the riots that occured in 1991 were between blacks and whites. I am sure no one has forgotten the brutality of the beating of Rodney King we all saw on video-tape. A man was testing his new camera on March 3, when he observed four white , Los Angeles police officers beating the 25 year old motorist. The country was outraged to see the four officers repeatedly clubbing King as he lay on the ground. On April 29, 1992 twelve jurors in Sylma, California rendered their verdicts. The verdicts were broadcast live, and word spread quickly throughout Los Angeles(website). The acquittal of police officers charged with the Rodney King beating led to the 1992 Los Angeles riots that left 50 dead and $1 billion in damages(Coffey-See 24). On August 22 of 1991 a tragic car accident sparked the Brooklyn riots. A car driven by a Hasidic Jew hit two young black children, killing one. The result was a series of riots that lasted for three days and nights, with fifteen Brooklyn police officers being injured. These two riots are proof that racial harmony was no characteristic in the year of 1991.

Other events touched the hearts of the American people also. Michael Landon lost his battle with cancer on July 1, 1991. Michael was an actor, producer, director, and writer who specialized in wholesome family television shows(Grogan 42). Cancer was slowly becoming a common occurrence to the American people. Michael Landon’s lost battle was proof that it does not just happen to the “average” person . The death of Eric Clapton’s son touched the hearts of many. The young child fell from the 53rd floor of an apartment building. It was such an unnecessary tragedy. The world was in shock when a psychopath opened fire in a Luby’s restaurant in a Texas town killing 22 people. This tragedy made many realize that you are never truly safe? not even eating dinner at a family restaurant.

Obviously, 1991 was a pretty eventful year. Looking back, big occurences in 1991 have become some what a “run of the mill” in today’s society. Which goes back to my idea of 1991 being a building block of the future. But, you do have to take the good with the bad. 1991 may have been a minor setback for the U.S. , but as always we prevailed. The United States is a wonderful country and I wouldn’t live anywhere else? but one must realize that bad things happen everywhere and the United States is no exception.

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