



AP/Wide World

Millions of South Africans travel weary hours and wait in mile-long lines to vote in the first all-race elections. After more than a century of white rule, the voters choose former political prisoner Nelson Mandela to preside over the dismantling of apartheid.

Jimmy Carter, former U.S. president and self-styled global troubleshooter for peace, negotiates on behalf of the U.S. in Haiti, Bosnia, and North Korea. He even offers to help settle the baseball strike.



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In Japan, an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.2 collapses buildings, derails trains, buckles elevated expressways, and causes fires throughout the city of Kobe. Over 5,000 people are killed and 26,000 injured. The Japan quake occurs January 17, 1995, one year to the day after a quake devastated Los Angeles.



Larry Downing, Sygma

U.S. President Bill Clinton, right, and British Prime Minister John Major take part in ceremonies in June 1994 at a military cemetery during the 50th anniversary commemoration of the Allied D-Day invasion of Europe, the event that sealed the fate of Nazi Germany during World War II.



India suffers an outbreak of pneumonic plague, carried by flea-infested vermin. Workers in Bombay earn five rupees for each exterminated rat; one thousand rat-tails earns a color TV.



Catherine Henriette, ICONE

Chinese school children, dressed to look like Colonel Sanders, welcome the president of Kentucky Fried Chicken to Shanghai in May 1994. Few of the country's many foreign business ventures thrive, but KFC becomes a Chinese favorite. The finger-lickin' enterprise makes plans to expand its outlets from 28 to 200.

A triumphant Jean-Bertrand Aristide reclaims his position as president and restores democracy to Haiti with the help of U.S. troops. Haiti had suffered under the rule of a military junta led by General Raoul Cedras, who goes into exile after reaching an agreement with U.S. mediators.



Reuters/Bettmann

In one of the most successful antiterrorist operations in aviation history, French commandos storm an Air France jet-liner and kill four Algerian hijackers, freeing the plane's 173 passengers and crew.



Allan Tammenbaum, Sygma

Thousands of Cubans flee their economically depressed homeland, hoping for a better life in America. Many set off on homemade rafts and other small vessels only to be intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard. The United States and Cuba reach an agreement in September that allows 20,000 Cuban immigrants to enter the United States each year.

In the wake of the 1994 Los Angeles earthquake and the southern California wildfires of 1993, California experiences more natural disasters in January 1995 when rainstorms cause flooding that kills 11 people and leaves 3,000 others homeless. Flooding is so high in Santa Barbara, fun-seeking teenagers dive off a freeway overpass into 15 feet of water. President Clinton declares 34 counties federal disaster areas.

In 1994, the U.S. registers a one-year population growth of 2.7 million. One-third of the increase is due to immigration, the largest such influx since 1914.

Author and humanities professor, Ralph Ellison, dies at age 80. His 1952 novel, *Invisible Man*, has been called the most powerful novel written about alienation, identity, and racism in America.

A huge increase in killings by 14- to 24-year-olds raises the nation's homicide rate, while violence blamed on preteens rocks communities nationwide. A boy, 13, is sentenced to life for strangling a four-year-old. In Chicago, an 11-year-old boy kills a 14-year-old girl and is then executed by his own gang. In Washington state a pair of 12-year-olds shoot a migrant worker.

The death of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis in May 1994 marks the end of an era, a time when America was prosperous, fighting for civil rights, and heading for the moon. The former first lady is buried next to her husband, President John F. Kennedy, in Arlington National Cemetery, Washington, D.C.



Sygnia

Called the Republican revolution, November mid-term elections put the Republican party and its anti-big government platform in control of Congress for the first time in 40 years. Georgia's Newt Gingrich, author of the GOP's "Contract with America," is the new Speaker of the House.



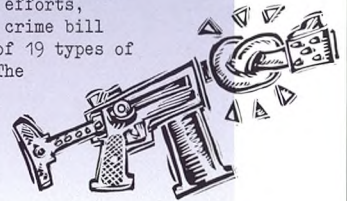
Heat, drought, and lightning combine to set Western states ablaze in late June and July. Fires consume 2,000 acres in Colorado's South Canyon when 50 mile-an-hour winds whip the flames into a firestorm, killing 14 specially trained firefighters; 10 men and four women.



Jeffrey Markowitz, Sygnia

The volunteers for Silent March bring shoes from every state for one of the quietest demonstrations to ever take place in Washington, D.C. Each empty pair of shoes represents one of the more than 40,000 Americans who have been killed by handguns.

Despite powerful National Rifle Association lobby efforts, Congress passes a crime bill banning the sale of 19 types of assault weapons. The Brady Law goes into effect; in one month 23,610 people with criminal records are denied the purchase of a handgun.



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The prosecution seeks the death penalty in the case of Susan Smith, who dupes the nation with a frightening tale of the abduction of her two little boys. The community's early support grows quickly to hatred when Smith confesses to murder—she sent her children to their deaths at the bottom of a lake.



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