



## **My Drift**

**Title: Worst Days and Years in U.S. History**

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**The year 2020 is turning out to be a VERY BAD YEAR! The world-wide Coronavirus Pandemic is affecting every country but is especially bad in the United States. I'm writing this article in mid-July and here are the rounded off number of COVID-19 cases and deaths as of 7/11/2020:**

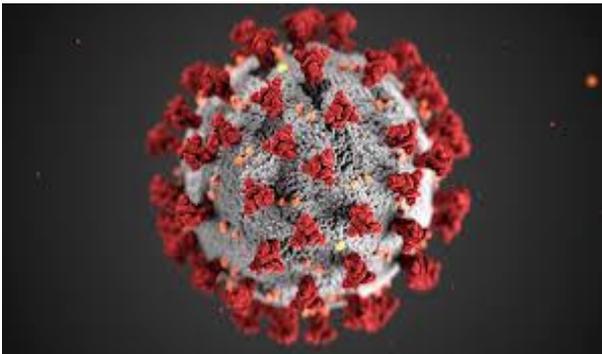
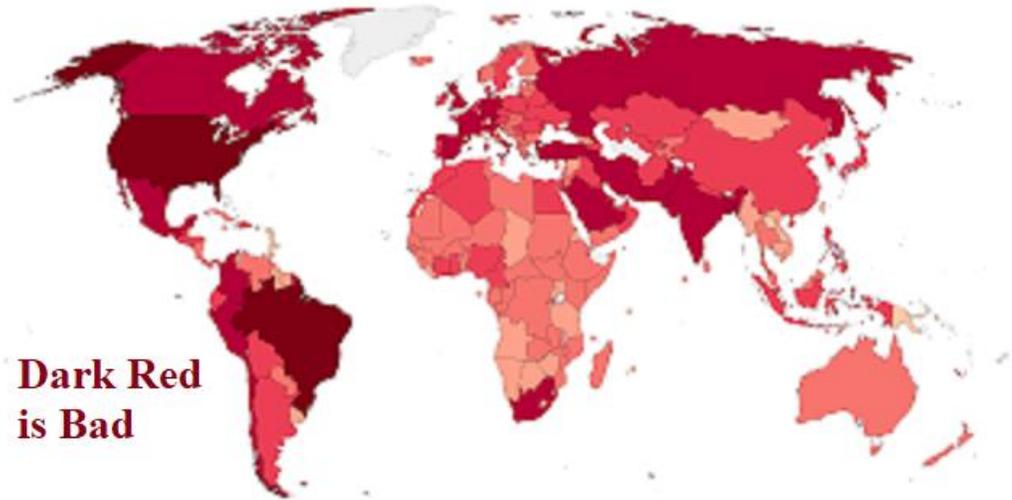
<b>World</b>	<b>12.5 Million Cases</b> <b>560,000 Deaths</b>
<b>United States</b>	<b>3.3 Million Cases (63,653 New Cases)</b> <b>137,000 Deaths</b>
<b>Hawaii</b>	<b>1,200 Cases (309 Active Cases)</b> <b>19 Deaths</b>

**This virus started in China in November or December 2019 and didn't get bad in the U.S. until early March 2020. Right now, less than 5 months later, the U.S. is the new world epicenter for the COVID-19 disease.**

**And if the Pandemic was not enough, we also have "Social Justice" and "Black Lives Matter" riots going on across the country. Thousands of idiots are protesting and rioting in the streets of America burning down buildings, looting, fighting, killing people, and destroying other people's property. Now they are trying to tear down all the statues that represents our country's proud history.**

**Some past years were bad, but none had all that we have right now: a pandemic, an economic meltdown, soaring unemployment, racial violence, and political turmoil. Yes, by the end of the year, 2020 could well become the worst year in America's history.**

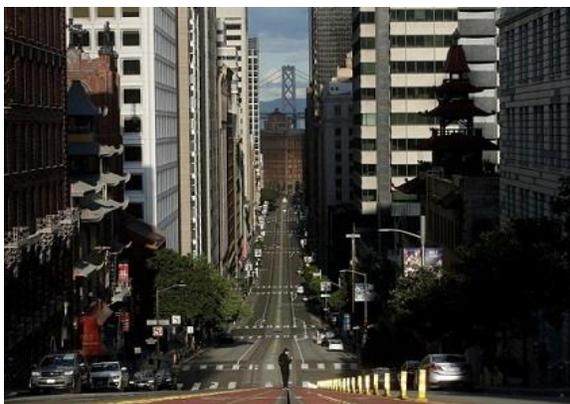
**Year 2020 – The Coronavirus Pandemic and Radical Unrest**



**Coronavirus Pandemic**



**Racial Riots**



**America's Cities were Locked Down**



**Tearing Down our Nation's Statues**

**The World and America have had a lot of bad years. Scientists and historians are split on the worst year in the history of the world – it was either the year 536 or the year 1348.**

**Why the year 536 was ‘the worst year in history to be alive’.**

**Ask medieval historian Michael McCormick what year was the worst to be alive, and he's got an answer: "536." Not 1348, when the Black Death wiped out half of Europe. Not 1918, when the flu killed up to 100 million people, mostly young adults. But 536. In Europe, "It was the beginning of one of the worst periods to be alive, if not the worst year ever," says McCormick, a historian and archaeologist who chairs the Harvard University Initiative for the Science of the Human Past.**

**A mysterious fog plunged Europe, the Middle East, and parts of Asia into darkness, day and night—for 18 months. The sun gave forth its light without brightness, like the moon, during the whole year. Temperatures in the summer of 536 fell to about 2°C or 35°F, initiating the coldest decade in the past 2300 years. Snow fell that summer in China; crops failed; people starved. The Irish chronicles record "a failure of bread from the years 536–539." Then, in 541, bubonic plague struck the Roman port of Pelusium, in Egypt. What came to be called the Plague of Justinian spread rapidly, wiping out one-third to one-half of the population of the eastern Roman Empire and hastening its collapse.**



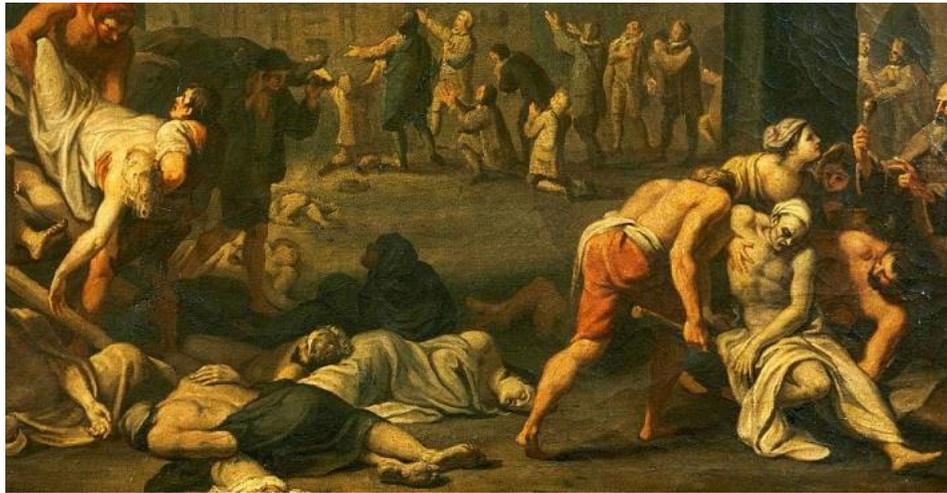
**The Year 536 was a DARK YEAR**

**Historians have long known that the middle of the sixth century was a dark hour in what is called the Dark Ages, but the source of the mysterious clouds has long been a puzzle. Now, an ultraprecise analysis of ice from a Swiss glacier indicates that a cataclysmic volcanic eruption in Iceland spewed ash across the**

Northern Hemisphere early in 536. Two other massive eruptions followed, in 540 and 547. The repeated blows, followed by plague, plunged Europe into economic stagnation that lasted until 640.

### **Why the year 1348 was ‘the worst year in history to be alive’.**

The Black Death, also known as the Bubonic Plague or Pneumonic Plague, was the most fatal pandemic recorded in human history. The Black Death resulted in the deaths of about 200 million people in Europe, Asia, and North Africa, peaking in Europe from 1347 to 1351.



**The Black Death (Bubonic Plague and/or Pneumonic Plague)**

The Black Death created religious, social, and economic upheavals, with profound effects on the course of European history.

The Black Death most likely originated in China from where it travelled along the Silk Road, reaching Crimea by 1347. From there, it was most likely carried by fleas living on the black rats that traveled on Genoese merchant ships, spreading throughout the Mediterranean Basin and reaching Africa, Western Asia, and the rest of Europe via Constantinople, Sicily, and the Italian Peninsula in 1348. Current evidence indicates that once it came onshore, the Black Death was in large part spread by human fleas – which cause Pneumonic Plague – and the person-to-person contact explains the very fast inland spread of the epidemic, which was faster than would be expected if the primary vector was rat fleas causing bubonic plague.

### **Worst Days and Years in America’s History**

America has never had any years that bad, but we have had several bad years besides 2020 that we will examine next.

## Year 1968 – Vietnam War, Assassinations, Race Riots, and Other Bad Things



Despite heavy casualties, North Vietnam achieved a strategic victory with the Tet Offensive which started in early 1968, as the attacks marked a turning point in the Vietnam War and the beginning of the slow, painful American withdrawal from the region. 1968 was the deadliest year for the U.S. in Vietnam with a death toll of 16,899. (About 46 deaths every day of the year) This war (Nov 1, 1955 – Apr 30, 1975) cost the U.S. the lives of 58,365 military personnel.



**Robert F. Kennedy**

On June 5, 1968, Robert F. Kennedy was mortally wounded shortly after midnight at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. Earlier that evening, the 42-year-old junior senator from New York was declared the winner in the South Dakota and California primaries. Gunman Sirhan Sirhan, a Jordanian citizen of Palestinian descent, was captured at the scene. No riots!



**Martin Luther King**

On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. He was fatally shot on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel by James Earl Ray, a white supremacist. Over the next week, riots in more than 100 cities nationwide left 39 people dead, more than 2,600 injured and 21,000 arrested.

## More bad things that happened in 1968



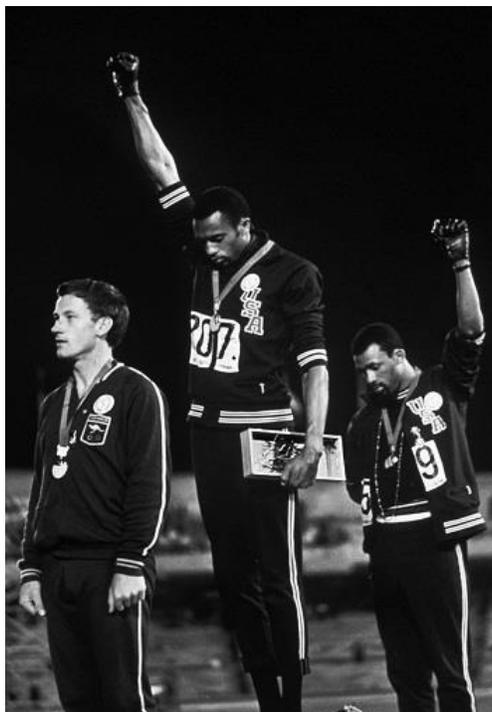
### **North Korea seizes the USS Pueblo**

One U.S. crewman is killed, and 82 others are imprisoned in an 11-month standoff with the United States.



### **Democratic National Convention**

Chicago police and National Guard fight with hundreds of antiwar demonstrators with much of the violence broadcast on national TV.



### **1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City** "Black Power"

Americans Tommie Smith and John Carlos receive the gold and bronze medals in the 200-meter dash, then raise gloved fists during the national anthem to protest violence toward African Americans. The next day, the International Olympic Committee strips their medals and sends them home.

**9-11-2001 and December 7, 1941, are two of the Worst Days in American history.**

**What were you doing when the Islamic Terrorists hijacked four commercial airplanes and attacked America on 9/11/2001? Some events are so terrible that people remember exactly what time, where they were, and what they were doing when it happened. Time stands still!! Events like the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the JFK assassination are two other events that come to mind. I know one thing for sure, most people in Hawaii were sleeping when that first plane flew into the North Tower of the New York's World Trade Center at 8:46AM Eastern Time (this was 2:46AM in Hawaii). But word got around fast even at that time in the morning. One of my wife's friends called the house and my wife woke me up and told me to turn on the TV. I was watching when the second plane flew into the South Tower at 9:03AM ET. Then we find out that another plane has crashed into the Pentagon in Washington D.C. at 9:37AM ET. At this point, nobody knew how many planes were hijacked and all commercial airplanes were told to land at the nearest available airport. No planes were to take off. About this time, we hear that there is a fourth hijacked plane which eventually crashed near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, at 10:03AM ET. Thank God there were no more hijacked planes in the sky that day.**

**That morning I didn't know whether or not to go to work but at 4:30AM I got into my truck and drove to Fort Shafter. After I was there for about an hour, we (there were 3 of us in the building) got word that everybody was being told to stay home. We had a TV at the office, and we watched the horror as the Trade Center Towers collapsed and all those people were killed.**

### **THE JAPANESE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR**



**Pearl Harbor Attack**



**USS Arizona Memorial**

**9-11 has been called "America's second Pearl Harbor," and was even more deadly than the Japanese attack on December 7, 1941. A total of 2,388 people died in Hawaii that day (1,998 Navy, 233 Army, 109 Marines, and 48 Civilians).**

**The 9-11 attacks caused President George W. Bush's to declare War on terror and sent the United States to war in Iraq and Afghanistan.**

**Like Pearl Harbor, the 9-11 attacks were surprise attacks without a declaration of war, but unlike the attack that ignited America's entry into World War II, it was not an assault by a nation's armed forces, but one by 19 Muslim men (lead by Mohamed Atta) whose allegiance was to a Middle East terrorist organization called al-Qaeda.**



**Mohamed Atta**

### **THE ATTACK ON NEW YORK CITY'S WORLD TRADE CENTER TOWERS**



**Almost 3,000 people were killed on September 11, 2001, during a coordinated attack on New York City's World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The attacks left 2,606 people dead in New York City, 125 dead at the Pentagon including 55 military personnel and 246 dead on the four planes the terrorists hijacked for the attack.**

### **THE ATTACK ON THE PENTAGON AND THE CRASH NEAR SHANKSVILLE, PA**

**Two of hijacked jetliners that were heavily laden with aviation fuel struck the Twin Towers and a third was flown into the Pentagon. The fourth, United Airlines Flight 93, crashed in a Pennsylvania field near Shanksville, after heroic passengers attempted to regain control of the plane, which officials believe was targeted to strike either the U.S. Capitol Building or the White House.**



**The Pentagon**



**Field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania**

### **THE AFTERMATH OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER TOWERS COLLAPSE**



**The victims included 1,355 people in the North Tower, who were trapped or died of smoke inhalation above the point of impact; fell or jumped to escape smoke and flames; or were killed when the building collapsed after being struck by American Airline Flight 11 at 8:46 AM ET. Another 107 people below the point of impact died.**

**Some 630 people died in the South Tower after it was struck by United Airlines Flight 175 at 9:03 AM ET. The smaller number of casualties has been attributed to one stairway that remained intact allowing 18 people to escape from above the point of impact and the decision by many South Tower workers to evacuate after the North Tower was struck.**

## **FIREFIGHTERS, POLICE, AND EMERGENCY PERSONNEL WERE ALSO KILLED**



In addition, 411 firefighters, police officers and emergency services personnel who responded to the scene died as they tried to rescue people and fight fires. The City of New York Fire Department lost 341 firefighters and 2 paramedics, the New York City Police Department lost 23 officers, the Port Authority Police Department lost 37 officers, and eight emergency medical technicians and paramedics from private emergency medical service units also were killed. The remains of only 1,600 of the World Trade Center victims have been positively identified.

## **PLEASE – NEVER FORGET THE 9-11 AND PEARL HARBOR ATTACKS!**

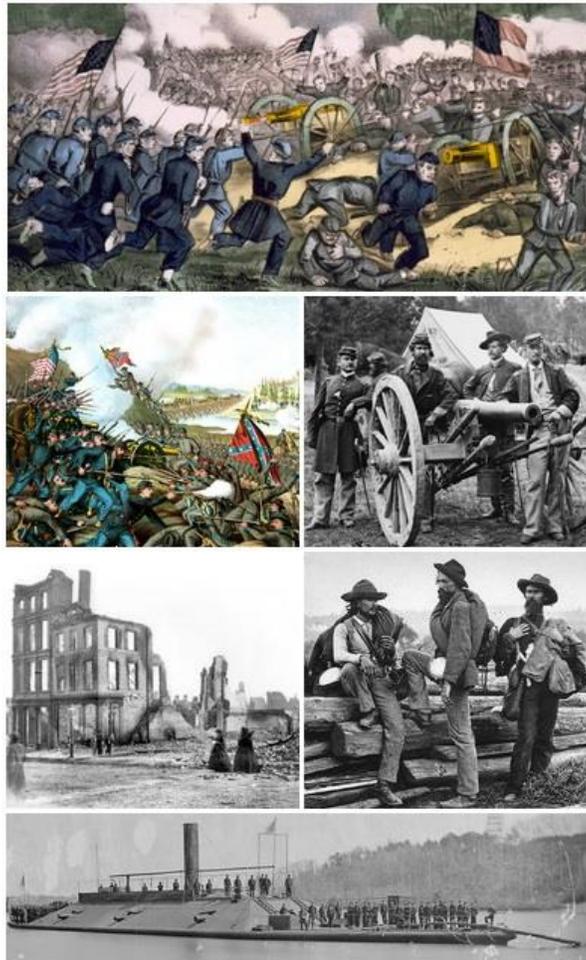
### **Year 1862 – The American Civil War**

The American Civil War (1861 to 1865) was fought between northern states loyal to the Union and southern states that had seceded from the Union to form the Confederate States of America.

Of the 34 U.S. states in February 1861, seven Southern slave-holding states were declared by their state governments to have seceded from the country, and the Confederate States of America was organized in rebellion against the U.S. constitutional government. The Confederacy grew to control at least a majority of territory in eleven states, and it claimed the additional states of Kentucky and Missouri by assertions from native secessionists fleeing Union authority. These states were given full representation in the Confederate Congress throughout the Civil War. The two remaining slave-holding states, Delaware and Maryland, were invited to join the Confederacy, but nothing developed due to intervention by federal troops.

The Union and the Confederacy quickly raised volunteer and conscription armies that fought mostly in the South for four years. Approximately 620,000

**soldiers died from combat, accident, starvation, and disease during the Civil War (about 360,000 US Union Soldiers and about 260,000 Confederate Soldiers). The Civil War remains the deadliest military conflict in American history and accounted for more American military deaths than all other wars combined until the Vietnam War.**



**The American Civil War**



**Battle of Antietam**



**Battle of Gettysburg**

**The Battle of Antietam**, also known as the Battle of Sharpsburg, was fought on September 17, 1862, between Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and Union General George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac, near Sharpsburg, Maryland and Antietam Creek. Part of the Maryland Campaign, it was the first field army-level engagement in the Eastern Theater of the American Civil War to take place on Union soil. **It was the bloodiest day in United States military history, with a combined tally of 26,134 dead, wounded, or missing.**

**The Battle of Gettysburg** was fought July 1–3, 1863, in and around the town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, by Union and Confederate forces and **resulted in the largest number of casualties of the entire war.** Casualties at Gettysburg totaled 23,049 for the Union (3,155 dead, 14,529 wounded, 5,365 missing). Confederate casualties were 28,063 (3,903 dead, 18,735 injured, and 5,425 missing), more than a third of General Lee's army.

**1862 was the most deadly year of the Civil War - Major Battles are listed below:**

Battle Name	Date	Casualties	
		Union	Confederate
Battle of Antietam, MD	Sep 17, 1862	12,410	13,724
Battle of Manassas, VA	Aug 29-30, 1862	16,054	9,197
Battle of Stone River, TN	Dec 31, 1862	12,906	11,739
Battle of Shiloh, TN	Apr 6-7, 1862	13,047	10,694
Battle of Fort Donelson, TN	Feb 13-16, 1862	2,832	16,623

**Year 1918 – Influenza (Spanish Flu) Pandemic, World War I and Civil Unrest**

**The 1918 influenza pandemic occurred in three waves and was the most severe pandemic in U.S. history.**

Yes, the year 1918 was a very bad year. In fact, my research shows it to be the worst year in U.S. history. The year 2020 may turn out to be the worst year in our history but we will see about that later. The 1918 Influenza (Spanish Flu) pandemic was the most severe pandemic in recent history. It was caused by an H1N1 virus with genes of avian origin. It was dubbed the Spanish flu because it was thought at the time to have originated in Spain. This turned out to be wrong. Although there is not universal consensus regarding where the virus originated, it spread worldwide during 1918-1919. In the United States, it was first identified in military personnel in the spring (March) of 1918.

It is estimated that about 500 million people or one-third of the world's population became infected with this virus. The number of deaths was estimated to be at least 50 million worldwide with about 675,000 occurring in the United States. Mortality was high in people younger than 5 years old, 20-40 years old, and 65 years and older. The high mortality in healthy people, including those in the 20 to 40 age group, was a unique feature of this pandemic.

**Death rate comparison between H1N1 and COVID-19 virus.** Although it is something of a moving target as more deaths occur and broader diagnostic testing is performed, finding higher levels of infection, sometimes with no symptoms, the global fatality rate for COVID-19 is about 5% world-wide, although in the U.S. it is about 2% which is still about 20 times the fatality rate of a typical seasonal influenza of 0.1%. The death rate for the H1N1 (Spanish Flu) virus was closer to 10% - at least twice as deadly as what we are dealing with today.



**Warehouses Used to House the Sick**



**Police Required to Wear Mask**

**With no vaccine to protect against influenza infection and no antibiotics to treat secondary bacterial infections that can be associated with influenza infections, control efforts worldwide were limited to non-pharmaceutical interventions such as isolation, quarantine, good personal hygiene, use of disinfectants, and limitations of public gatherings, which were applied unevenly.**



**Women did most of the work in U.S. during the pandemic since most able-bodied men were drafted to fight in the War raging in Europe.**

**Sports in 1918 were limited.** There was no NBA (started in 1946) and no NFL (started in 1920). Major League baseball was the only game in town. Most teams played with less than 20 players (due to the war) and the season was cut short to 130 games. The 1918 World Series featured the Boston Red Sox, who defeated the Chicago Cubs four games to two. Babe Ruth pitched and hit home runs to help the Red Sox win the title.

### **How did the Spanish Flu (H1N1 virus) pandemic end?**

In 1918, it was quickly understood that crowds could cause further transmission. Lockdowns were put in place and social distancing measures proved effective. Does the lockdown measures put in place over a century ago sound familiar today? Yes - restaurants, bars, theaters, schools, and borders were all closed. Public spaces, including telephones, were disinfected and people could be fined up to \$100 for not wearing a mask.

The end of the pandemic occurred sometime in 1920, when society ended up developing a collective immunity to the Spanish flu, although the virus never completely disappeared. No vaccine was ever developed.

**When does a pandemic end?** A pandemic ends when there is no uncontrolled community transmission and active cases are at a very low level.

## **World War I (July 28, 1914 – November 11, 1918)**

The total number of military and civilian casualties in World War I, was around 40 million. There were 20 million deaths and 21 million wounded. The total number of deaths includes about 10 million military personnel and about 10 million civilians. The U.S. casualties included about 120,000 deaths and more than 200,000 wounded. About two-thirds of military deaths in World War I were in battle, unlike the conflicts that took place in the 19th century when the majority of deaths were due to disease. Nevertheless, disease, including the 1918 flu pandemic and deaths while held as prisoners of war, still caused about one third of total military deaths.



**American Soldiers March off to War**



**WW1 Trench Warfare**



**Poison Gas was used in WW1**



**WW1 Fighter Plane**

## **1918-1919 Social Conflicts**

The war effort created an aura of ultra-patriotism and papered over tensions, but when the war ended in late 1918, all those tensions that had been suppressed let loose. As African Americans from the South moved north to industrial jobs in the beginning of what was known as the “Great Migration”, race riots broke out, mostly in the upper Midwest. The worst was a major conflict that took place when ethnic white Americans committed violent acts against black Americans in Chicago.

**CONCLUSION: 2020 is almost a “Carbon Copy” of 1918 minus the War.**

**Rating the WORST 4 Years in American History**

- 1. 1918                      2. 2020                      3. 1968                      4. 1862**

**Rating the WORST 10 Days in American History**

- 1. 09-11-2001 - Islamic Terrorist Attack on America**  
**2. 12-07-1941 War - Pearl Harbor Hawaii Attack by the Japanese**  
**3. 09-17-1862 War - Battle of Antietam in Maryland**



- 4. 08-24-1814 War - The Burning of the White House in Washington D.C. during the British invasion of the capital during the War of 1812.**



- 5. 01-28-1986 - Space Shuttle Challenger Disaster**



**6. 11-22-1963 Assassination of John F. Kennedy (No riots)**



**7. 04-16-1865 - Abraham Lincoln Assassination**



**8. 10-21-1929 – “Black Thursday” Stock Market Crash**



**9. 04-18-1906 – San Francisco Earthquake**



**10. 09-08-1900 - The Great Galveston Texas Hurricane**

Okay, there have been many other bad days and years in America's history, but these are my picks. Let me know if I missed anything really bad.

Let's hope the year 2020 doesn't become the worst year in American history.

**Hope you all stay SAFE, HEALTHY, and HAPPY!**

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