

# What's Coming

by Bill Herbst

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When people ask me about the November election — and they do — I tell them that, in my opinion as an astrologer, a citizen, a longstanding proponent of fundamental change in America, and a commentator on collective humanity in the 21st century, the results of the election are not predictable. This is not to suggest that I have no opinions about what's coming. It's just that I don't think that whether Trump or Biden wins the election is nearly as important as many people believe.

In both my public writing and private conversation, I've stated repeatedly my assessment of Donald Trump's future over the next couple of years. It's a four-word prediction: *Trump is going down*. Period. Full stop. The Donald's day in the sun is over, and now it's just a question of how quickly and how far he'll fall, and, more importantly, how many of us he'll take down with him.

Trump won't go quietly into the night. He will not (and cannot) surrender. Instead, Trump will fight and scratch and tear and rage all the way to his eventual and ultimate comeuppance, just like the wounded, rabid animal he is. He'll do literally anything to try to escape from the bear trap he's now snared in, including gnawing off his own leg. But nothing will work. *Trump is going down*.

Trump's lies won't save him. Nor will the unflagging support of his base — that 40% of the American public that has, for any of a thousand different disturbed motivations, been seduced into his cult. While Trump will probably manage to beat down some of the dogs from the ever-increasing pack of hounds hot on his trail, he won't escape. The dogs will tree him, quite probably along with some of his family members. I don't know whether the dogs will literally kill Trump, tearing him to shreds, or simply corner him so that he can be caged and brought to the harsh justice he so richly deserves. But, one way or another, *Trump is going down*.

It doesn't really matter much whether or not Trump wins a second term as President. If he does win, Trump won't be able to last through his second term. If he doesn't win, America may have to deal with significant carnage nonetheless.

OK, readers may agree or disagree with any or all of my opinions about Donald Trump, but what do I think about Joe Biden?

Biden's natal chart — and in particular the once-in-a-lifetime Neptune transit he's currently moving through — tell me that he's playing out the fulfillment of a longstanding and deeply-held personal fantasy, that of reaching the pinnacle of the White House as President. The materialization of that dream into reality is not guaranteed, of course — that's the case with all experiences linked to the Neptunian realm — but this year and next represent Biden's best shot ever. And his last.

With his natal 12th-house Sun square to Chiron and elevated Neptune in the 10th, Biden has at long last found his political niche, that of Consoler-in-Chief, which happens to juxtapose nicely against Trump's lack of compassion. Whether that will be enough to carry him to victory remains to be seen, but it suits him.

If Biden wins — however long may be required to determine the election's outcome — and actually takes office after being sworn in as the new President, will he be able to keep the ship of Titanic America from sinking? No. I don't think there's much chance that Biden (or anyone else) could do that. America is sinking, and no individual can stop it. If elected, Biden will have roughly a year to accomplish whatever triage and hospice care he can provide for a desperately wounded country.

What are the chances that Biden will get through an entire four-year term? I don't know, but I'd guess that the odds aren't great. (The same is true for Trump, by the way.) Am I suggesting that Biden will die in office? No, that's a bridge way too far for me. My sense is more open-ended than literal mortality. Any number of events could transpire that might cause Biden to step down and bequeath the Oval Office to his Vice President, Kamala Harris. I'm not predicting that, but, given Biden's age and apparent physical fragility, it's one of the obvious elephants in the room.

The problem that both Trump and Biden face (as do we all) is that America has already hit the iceberg, and the only real questions are how long the ship will stay afloat and which passengers make it into the lifeboats. Those who don't are at risk of going down with the ship.

The iceberg to which I refer isn't an external or concrete event, such as Pearl Harbor or 9-11. It's not the COVID-19 pandemic. It's our succumbing as a people to the historical insanity that has always raged just beneath the surface of our ideals. Americans haven't gone crazy. We've simply lost the veneer of sanity that provided the illusion of our being OK.

This probably doesn't mean that America will vanish as a country. That's one of a number of ways the metaphor of America as the Titanic comes up short. The sinking of a ship is typically straightforward and relatively quick, while the decline of an empire is usually complicated and gradual. Empires don't disappear; they erode over time. Most likely, America will continue to exist as a nation, and probably keep wielding considerable global power and influence. By the time the decade of the 2020s is over, however, odds are very high that America will be a quite different place. I don't, however, have any firm predictions about how that will look.

From a strictly astrological perspective, all that I've written so far in this commentary boils down to a small number of very significant and symbolically powerful transits:

- *in Donald Trump's chart, Pluto is opposing his natal Saturn-Venus conjunction from 2020 through 2022, along with Saturn doing the same this year.*
- *Joe Biden has Neptune crossing his natal Lower Heaven throughout 2020 and 2021.*
- *the USA is coming up on its Pluto Return, which gears up in 2021, is exact in 2022, and continues through 2023. Astrologically, this is a Very Big Deal.*
- *collective humanity is reeling in the aftermath of the long Uranus-Pluto square that finally ended in early 2020 (after a tumultuous 13-year run) and has been replaced quite dramatically by the conjoining of Saturn, Jupiter, and Pluto in the heavens through January of next year. That is accompanied by Saturn square Uranus, which is gearing up through 2020 and takes over as a dominant theme in 2021 and 2022.*

As always, there are many, many other transits occurring in the three natal charts and for humanity as a whole, but all those other active cycles in Trump's, Biden's, and the USA's charts take a back seat to the relatively few critical major transits I listed above. Actually, it's all pretty simple. These are not times of nuance and subtlety. We're moving through a period that's crude, rough, and harsh. Disturbed passions are moving us ever closer toward force and violence — domination and confrontation rather than negotiation and cooperation. The tribalism and hard boundaries between us and them are cast in stone now. That will eventually subside, but not soon.

Is America headed toward civil war? I'd say that we're already there. For a century and a half, we've had equality and justice for some, but not all. This includes systemic racism, obviously, but goes beyond into the realms of wealth disparity and class distinctions.

I don't pretend to know how the election will play out, but I think we can expect some pretty nasty stuff to accompany and shape the coming months, both before and after the election. Maybe it will be just more of what we've been going through all year. Maybe it will be worse. The tenor of the times is toward full-tilt, knockdown-drag-out, give-no-quarter battles between irrevocably opposed sides whose adherents can't stand each other and don't recognize any mutual respect. All the talk of restoring unity will go for naught.

I'd strongly advise not expecting any general reconciliation after the election, regardless of the outcome. Whoever occupies the White House will have one hell of a time dealing with a pandemic that hasn't even peaked yet and will probably rage on with ferocity. The economy will remain tanked and fractured. The winners may be temporarily exultant, but that's likely to fade quickly as the losers act out their angst and bitterness.

All in all, it's not a pretty picture. But such is the nature of insanity when it erupts from its hiding places and overtakes us. This welling up of monsters from the id has happened before, but the stakes were never this high. To have even a chance of getting our heads screwed on straight and embracing the path of sanity and maturity, apparently we have to go through this dark night of the soul.

As Trump himself said recently when referring to the appalling numbers of pandemic-related American deaths, "*It is what it is.*"