

# A Carnival of Propaganda | The Atlantic

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Americans who tuned in to this week's Republican National Convention were treated to a slickly produced, four-day dispatch from an alternate reality—one in which the president has defeated the pandemic, healed America's racial wounds, and ushered in a booming economy. In this carnival of propaganda, Donald Trump was presented not just as a great president, but as a quasi-messianic figure who was single-handedly preventing the nation's slide into anarchy.

Every presidential-nominating convention is, to a certain extent, an exercise in hype and whitewashing. But Trump's 2020 convention went further—rewriting the history of his first term with such brazenness that it seemed designed to disorient. The setting of the convention's final night reinforced the surreality: the made-for-TV stage on the White House's South Lawn; the cheering, unmasked audience of more than 1,000 standing shoulder to shoulder; the speakers blaring Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the U.S.A." loud enough to drown out protesters at the gate.

"This election will decide whether we will defend the American way of life, or whether we allow a radical movement to completely dismantle it," the president declared in his speech formally accepting the Republican nomination. "That won't happen." By one count, the address contained at least 20 false or misleading claims.

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