

# [***A MAGA Lexicon for the Libs (and the Rest of Us) | Opinion***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BMT-1GX1-JBR6-9185-00000-00&context=1516831)

Newsweek.com

March 25, 2024 Monday 1:37 PM EST

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**Length:** 884 words

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**Highlight:** Like any writer who grapples honestly with the issues of his day, George Orwell was not right about everything, all the time.

**Body**

Like any writer who grapples honestly with the issues of his day, George Orwell was not right about everything, all the time. But in much of his work, and especially in his hundreds of essays, reviews, and editorials, the great skeptic and contrarian was as insightful about ***politics***, culture, and the uses and abuses of language as any critic who ever lived.

In one of his most enduring essays, [*"****Politics*** *and the English Language"*](https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/politics-and-the-english-language/) (1946), Orwell wrote that, in the wake of the Second World War, "the words *democracy, socialism, freedom, patriotic, realistic, justice,* have ... several different meanings which cannot be reconciled ... [and] words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way."

Applying a similar lens to words and phrases, from "patriot" to "election interference," beloved by former President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and his GOP minions, we can see a MAGA lexicon taking shape that is sure to grow even more tortured as the 2024 election draws near. Some sample entries:

**Patriot:** Jeffrey Sabol, a Colorado geophysicist [*recently sentenced to more than five years in federal prison*](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/justice-department/federal-judge-sentencing-jan-6-rioter-worries-trump-spur-another-attac-rcna144465) for his role in the attack on the Capitol, told [*FBI*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fbi?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) agents after his arrest that he was filled with "patriotic rage" on Jan. 6, and that he "answered the call [to battle] because he was a patriot warrior." His words echo those of hundreds of other rioters who have already been tried and convicted, or pleaded guilty, but who still insist that they took part in the day's disgraceful events because they believed easily disproved lies that the election was "stolen."

Thus, in some corners of the MAGA hive mind, a "patriot" is someone for whom elections are free and fair only if their candidate wins. The obvious remedy? Insurrection.

**Evidence:** MAGA stalwarts have relied on "evidence" to defend everything from election denial to the House Representatives' clown-car impeachment crusade against President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships).

When used by Trumpy diehards like [*Sidney Powell*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/sidney-powell?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), [*Rudy Giuliani*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/rudy-giuliani?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), and James Comer, however, "evidence" does not refer to "testimony, documents ... or other tangible objects ... proffered to make the existence of a fact more or less probable" [*(per Cornell Law School)*](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/evidence#:~:text=Evidence%20an%20item%20or%20information,testing%2C%20or%20other%20tangible%20objects.). Instead, evidence in the MAGA sense is a tissue of rumors, [*"wackadoodle" emails*](https://www.npr.org/2023/02/20/1158223099/fox-news-dominion-wackadoodle-election-fraud-claim), and lies concocted by shady weirdos and [*Russian intelligence groupies*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/hunter-biden-alexander-smirnov-joe-biden-russia/).

**Election Interference:** Vying for popularity with other mindless MAGA buzzwords—*Fake news! Enemy of the people!* [*Racist district attorney!*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/10/23/black-prosecutors-trump-willis-bragg-james/)—the cry of "election interference" has been lighting up Truth Social, X, and other platforms in recent months. The logic behind the phrase is that the "weaponization of the justice system," including civil cases in which Trump and his blundering attorneys have been routinely demolished, is part of the Deep State's undying attempt to derail the Dear Leader's 2024 candidacy.

That grand juries in separate jurisdictions found cause to indict Trump and others for *felony election interference* is a glaring irony lost on the MAGA faithful.

**Border Security:** Whether viewed as a national security issue, a humanitarian catastrophe, or an emblem of failed policies by multiple administrations, there is irrefutably a crisis at America's southern border. In February, the [*Senate*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/senate?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) sent a bipartisan proposal to the House that would be, in the words of Sen. [*James Lankford*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/james-lankford?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) (R-OK), "by far the most conservative border security bill in four decades."

The Republican-led House rejected the proposal. Why? [*Because Donald Trump told them to.*](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2024/02/06/senate-gop-border-security-immigration-trump-mcconnell/72490707007/) Why did he tell them to? Because Trump and the GOP [*are perfectly happy to see the border in chaos*](https://abcnews.go.com/538/democrats-pushing-hard-border-bill/story?id=106908843) so long as they can pummel Joe Biden and the [*Democrats*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democrats?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) with the issue until election day.

In fairness, Democrats and the American Left are hardly innocent of twisting language for political points. One example among many: [*George W. Bush*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/george-w.-bush?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)'s administration might have pursued policies that many found repulsive, [*or even illegal*](https://www.esquire.com/news-politics/politics/news/a35397/bush-cheney-war-crimes/), but did Bush himself earn [*the "fascist" label pinned on him*](https://www.salon.com/2004/04/19/fascism/) by more than a few opponents? Not so much.

So, yeah—Democrats and their allies have at times employed the sort of debased political language that, as Orwell once phrased it, "is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind."

But the GOP's wholesale reliance on such language in service to the extremist, anti-choice, grievance laden MAGA agenda suggests that [*Republicans*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republicans?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) no longer care to be seen as a party of sober, serious conservatives.

That party is long gone. Acquiescence to a grifter's insatiable self-interest, admiration of autocrats, thuggish posturing and, of course, his incessant, casual butchery of the English language, helped destroy it.

"Creatures out of the Dark Ages have come marching into the present," [*Orwell wrote of the cataclysm in Europe in the summer of 1941*](https://orwell.ru/library/reviews/wells/english/e_whws). It is hardly "giving an appearance of solidity to pure wind" to acknowledge that, waving Old Glory, upending the language, and pledging fealty to a would-be tyrant, many of those creatures are with us still.

*Benedict Cosgrove is a librarian, former editor at LIFE.com, and freelance writer who has contributed to the New York Times, Washington Post, Smithsonian, and other outlets. He lives in New York City.*

*The views expressed in this article are the writer's own.*

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2367607/getting-all-magad.jpg)

**Graphic**

Getting all MAGA'd Up

Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) puts on her Make America Great Again hat while addressing a campaign rally with Republican presidential candidate and former President Donald Trump at the Forum River Center March 9, in Rome, Georgia.

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2024

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