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The Daily 202

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By **Carol D. Leoni**
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Trump's coronavirus blame game is part of a pattern from the White House

Note to readers: James Hohmann is on vacation until July 20. We have an all-star lineup of guest hosts from The Post to ensure you stay informed during his absence.

Over the past five days, the United States **has suffered** a worsening resurgence of coronavirus cases indicating that — after six months — the most powerful country in the world has made **little progress** in controlling the virus and that Americans may indefinitely remain its prisoners.

President Trump, meanwhile, has been largely MIA on a question most citizens expect their president to address: What

does he plan to do now to better protect the public health and return the country to normalcy?

The American people heard little from their president over the weekend on the worrisome [infections](#) spreading throughout the South and West.

From Thursday to today, Trump apparently preferred to spend his time on other things.

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He [wiped away the prison sentence](#) of his convicted political adviser Roger Stone and golfed two days in a row at his Trump National Golf Club on the banks of the Potomac River. The president sent out dozens of tweets, including some that threatened [10-year prison sentences](#) for protesters who defile federal monuments and statues, defended his border wall, and [congratulated](#) his Fox News booster Sean Hannity for a “big night” of viewer ratings on Thursday night, when Trump was his guest.

Fox News Channel's Sean Hannity arrives before President Trump's tour of Fincantieri Marinette Marine shipyard in Wisconsin on June 25. (Carlos Barria/Reuters)

Fox News Channel's Sean Hannity arrives before President Trump's tour of Fincantieri Marinette Marine shipyard in Wisconsin on June 25. (Carlos Barria/Reuters)

Trump has increasingly sidestepped responsibility for leading a coordinated federal response.

That behavior fits a pattern in Trump's presidency in which the president seemingly has no interest in or patience for what he considers the boring work of governing, several of his former senior advisers say, speaking on the condition of anonymity. He was not fully engaged for the hard work of defusing the pandemic, including listening to panels of experts, sifting through scientific models and making hard choices to craft a whole-of-government response, an option not seriously considered.

Trump's attempts to contain the virus have always been tentative.

In early spring, as his advisers pushed the reluctant president to [deem the virus](#) a public health emergency, Trump tried marketing, taking to the White House lectern almost daily to talk about the “[great](#)” job his administration was doing to tackle the disease, despite a botched [testing launch that put the country way behind the curve in containment](#). Trump still routinely [pans testing](#) as a “double-edged sword,” arguing it only increases the number of confirmed cases and makes his administration “[look bad](#),” while simultaneously vowing an imminent vaccine. He then tried saddling governors with the responsibility of tamping down the crisis, while calling to “[LIBERATE!](#)” states that wouldn't move to reopen quickly enough. Now, he is saying schools [should move](#) to fully reopen this fall despite major pushback from local officials and teachers unions.



That's come into sharp relief again in the past five days, as the rate of coronavirus infections is setting records, suggesting America is back to square one in this health crisis.

Coronavirus [deaths are on the rise](#) in every region of the country. As happened in early spring, the volume of new cases is rising so fast, particularly in the Sun Belt, that testing [can't keep up](#). Receiving rapid test

results, quarantining the sick and controlling the virus's spread is proving nearly impossible. Several major school systems and colleges in California are retrenching on their plans to reopen this fall, and announced they will instead have online classes only for the time being. CEOs are preparing for employees to continue working remotely indefinitely after Labor Day, as well.

The worsening pandemic cries out for concrete steps from the federal government. But Trump has stubbornly sought to shift the blame for the situation and [sees himself](#) as the victim of an unfortunate convergence of circumstances.

Trump's most recent fall guy is Anthony S. Fauci.

Though never entirely on the same page as his top infectious-disease specialist, the president appeared with Fauci at coronavirus task force briefings, and the two seemed to be communicating earlier in the crisis. But things have clearly changed between the two men, with Trump apparently viewing Fauci's grim message about burgeoning cases and the dangers of reopening as a threat. In the midst of the most perilous public health threat in a century, the president hasn't met with Fauci in over a month. The doctor [slipped into](#) the White House yesterday, however, to meet with Chief of Staff Mark Meadows as criticism of the administration's bashing of him intensified.

 President Trump watches as Anthony S. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, speaks about the coronavirus at the White House. (Alex Brandon/AP)

President Trump watches as Anthony S. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, speaks about the coronavirus at the White House. (Alex Brandon/AP)

In the past five days, as the news has grown more dire and Fauci has refused to sugarcoat it, Trump and his allies have [sought](#) to cast Fauci as error-prone.



In his Thursday interview with Hannity, Trump criticized Fauci as a nice guy who has nevertheless “made a lot of mistakes.” By Monday, Trump’s souring on the doctor had become part of a larger concerted campaign within the White House. A senior White House official anonymously gave [reporters opposition-research-style bullet points](#) of comments Fauci made about the virus that were described as misleading or inaccurate. They included Fauci’s early advice that people who didn’t feel sick need not wear masks and should preserve the supply for medical workers, and Fauci typically cautioned the situation was evolving.

The White House list doesn’t mention Trump’s repeated inaccurate and misleading comments about the virus and the government’s response, including his claim the U.S. [could reopen safely](#) by Easter or his recommendation that people with covid-19 could get better by taking [hydroxychloroquine](#) or possibly by [being treated](#) with bleach or ultraviolet light. The list didn’t mention when Trump in January insisted the coronavirus was “[totally under control](#)” and would create only a few U.S. cases, or when [he said](#) the number of cases would “go down to zero.”

“It’s going to disappear,” Trump [said](#) Feb. 28. “One day it’s like a miracle, it will disappear.”

The campaign of presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden on Monday attacked Trump’s effort to blame Fauci.

“Over 135,000 Americans have lost their lives and tens of millions have lost their jobs because Donald Trump spent the last six months disastrously mismanaging the worst public health crisis in a century, the whole time failing to heed the warnings and guidance of medical experts — particularly Dr. Fauci,” Biden campaign spokesman Andrew Bates said.

So much of Trump's response is part of the playbook he deployed during the first three years of his presidency.

Trump finds governing tedious, several of his senior former advisers have said. He likes to make decisions on impulse, and later, if those decisions blow up in his face, he tends to blame others for making them.

Though Trump repeatedly praised his defense secretary Jim Mattis as one of his best Cabinet picks ever, he later concluded the four-star general was “[overrated](#)” after he resigned in protest of Trump's decision to pull U.S. soldiers out of Syria. Trump made the decision on the fly during a phone call when Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan asked him to leave Syria. Mattis felt it was militarily unwise to exit the battlefield, which would just allow Islamic State factions to regain their strongholds. He also considered it unethical to leave America's Kurdish allies in danger, and inexplicable for Trump to grant this gift to Erdogan without any benefit to the United States.

When [Trump was in Paris in November 2018](#) and didn't want to go to a sacred memorial to fallen American soldiers in World War II, he asked his chief of staff John Kelly and another aide for options. They said he could blame his absence on weather; it would be difficult to clear the streets for his motorcade at the last minute and potentially worrisome to fly by helicopter. But when Trump got terrible press for skipping the event, with some critics asking if he didn't want to get his hair wet, Trump blamed Kelly, saying he should have talked him into attending.

“He never apologizes,” said one former senior adviser who left the Trump administration. “It's always somebody else's fault. He can't take responsibility for any decision.”

This March, Trump [blamed](#) the rules and regulations from the Obama administration for his administration's inability to test enough Americans for the virus to control its spread at a critical early stage. He didn't mention

that he and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, had feared that such rapid, emergency testing might be bad for the markets and the economy.

“I don't take responsibility at all,” Trump [said](#).

Governing is boring, hard, uncertain. Blaming is infinitely easier.

Quote of the day

“It's shocking,” said Janis Orlowski, chief health-care officer of the Association of American Medical Colleges and one of many academics and researchers who rallied to defend Fauci from White House attacks. “When you begin to discredit scientists like Fauci, who are national treasures, you are in serious trouble.” ([Laurie McGinley and Yasmeen Abutaleb](#))

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More on the coronavirus



The White House will ask states to consider calling up the National Guard to help with data collection.

“A letter, to be sent to governors imminently, backs away from earlier drafts as recently as Friday that had directed state leaders to deploy the National Guard to help hospitals with daily data submissions. It now includes the National Guard among states' options for improving the data flow, according to two senior administration officials and one industry official who was informed Monday about the final version,” [Lena Sun and Amy Goldstein report](#). “Still, even the possibility of National Guard

involvement has infuriated hospital industry leaders, who say any data collection problems lie primarily with the Department of Health and Human Services and repeatedly changing federal instructions."

Schools in Los Angeles, San Diego and Atlanta will remain closed in the fall, teaching entirely online.

"Schools in Nashville plan to do the same, at least through Labor Day. Several other big cities were considering similar plans, while others have adopted hybrid plans where students will be in school on certain days and at home on others. Some have announced plans to open five days a week, as the White House has demanded, but they appear to be in the minority," [Laura Meckler reports](#). "At the White House Monday, Trump again pressed his case for in-person learning. 'Schools should be opened,' he said when asked for his message to worried parents. 'Schools should be opened. Kids want to go to school. You're losing a lot of lives by keeping things closed.'"

Trump is pushing colleges to reopen. Their health centers aren't prepared to handle the crisis.

"As millions go back to school during the pandemic, the ability of campus health services to safeguard and care for students will be tested as never before — and many colleges appear unprepared for the challenge. To assess the landscape of student health services at roughly 1,700 four-year residential campuses, The Post interviewed more than 200 students, parents and health officials and examined thousands of pages of medical records and court documents and 5,500 reviews of student health centers posted on Google," [Jenn Abelson, Nicole Dungca, Meryl Kornfield and Andrew Ba Tran report](#). "College students reported they commonly waited days or weeks for appointments and were routinely provided lackluster care. Dozens of students ended up hospitalized — and some near death — for mistakes they said were made at on-campus clinics ... Many students, including low-income individuals on Medicaid, said they avoided seeking treatment altogether because the care was too costly."

California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) announced a dramatic rollback of the state’s reopening plan.

Newsom ordered restaurants, wineries, movie theaters and museums to close their indoor operations. Bars have to shut down even for outdoor service, [Griff Witte reports](#). “Meanwhile, Miami was declared the latest ‘epicenter of the pandemic,’ and a senior medical official compared it to Wuhan at the height of China’s struggles with the virus. ... Monday’s figures showed that the virus continues to spread widely beyond the hard-hit Sun Belt states. Virginia, West Virginia, Alaska, Missouri, Hawaii, Rhode Island and Minnesota all saw the average rate of new infections rise between 41 and 55 percent compared with the week of July 6. Colorado, Kentucky, the District of Columbia, Montana, North Dakota and the Virgin Islands saw increases of average new infections at a rate of 63 percent or higher. Sparsely populated North Dakota had a particularly intense week, with the number of infections nearly doubling from 44 to 84.”

Americans’ use of masks varies greatly by demographics, a Gallup poll found.

The poll found less than half of Americans are following health officials’ guidance and always covering their nose and mouth while in public. Only 44 percent of American adults say they “always” wear their masks when outside home, with 28 percent saying they do so “very often.” Fourteen percent say they “never” wear a face mask. Majorities of women (54 percent), Democrats (61 percent) and Northeasterners (54 percent) say they always use masks outside their homes, while their counterparts do so less often. A majority of Republicans — 54 percent — said they wear masks infrequently, including 27 percent who said they never do.

- Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) was photographed flying without a mask. Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee operative Hosseh Enad shared the picture on Twitter, which shows Cruz sitting without a mask while holding a cup of coffee. Cruz’s office said the senator had

taken the mask off temporarily to sip his drink. American Airlines said it's "reviewing" the matter. ([Fox News](#))

- Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey (R) was photographed at a party without wearing a mask or practicing social distancing. A Phoenix resident shared the picture, along with a text exchange claiming it was taken July 6, when the majority of the state had mask mandates in place. Ducey's office dismissed the photo as a "personal attack." ([Arizona Republic](#))
- Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) was heckled at a press briefing by a resident who said he's "doing nothing" to curb the spread of the virus. ([Video](#))
- Elective medical procedures have been halted again in parts of Texas, Arizona, Florida and other states. For some patients, the spike in infections is reigniting fears about catching the virus in a hospital or a doctor's office. ([Laurie McGinley](#))
- Northern Virginia saw an ebb in new cases while numbers reached record highs elsewhere in the state. During the past three days, D.C., Virginia and Maryland combined have recorded their biggest daily case numbers since early June. ([Dana Hedgpeth and Julie Zauzmer](#))
- A Michigan house party resulted in at least 43 young people possibly carrying the disease into stores, restaurants, athletic camps and a retirement community, local health officials said. At least 66 people have been exposed by those who attended the party, not including family members and housemates. Michigan has reported at least 77,198 virus cases and 6,321 deaths. ([Katie Shepherd](#))
- Airport travelers arriving in New York from states that are on New York's quarantine list will be required to fill out detailed contact forms upon landing. Those who don't will face fines and summons, Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) said. ([WSJ](#))

Operation Warp Speed is pushing for treatment options to arrive months before the most optimistic vaccine timeline.

"Vaccines are the permanent hope for controlling this outbreak, but even with success, some people may not respond to vaccines and some may not get vaccinated, so we are always going to need therapeutics," said Janet

Woodcock, who is leading the therapeutics effort,” [Carolyn Johnson reports](#). “... Woodcock also emphasized the prospects for monoclonal antibodies, biotechnology drugs that can block the coronavirus and that are moving into large-scale trials this summer, in hopes of determining whether they are effective by fall.”

There’s also a race to produce billions of vials and syringes needed to deliver the vaccine around the world. “The job of delivering a vaccine to a majority of humans is so vast that global production of pharmaceutical vials needs to be ramped up by 5 to 10 percent within two years, a job the industry says requires immediate preparation and increases in production but is not an insurmountable challenge,” [Christopher Rowland reports](#).

The pandemic has stripped approximately 5.4 million Americans of their health insurance.

An analysis to be released today by the nonpartisan group Families USA “found that the estimated increase in uninsured workers from February to May was nearly 40 percent higher than the highest previous increase, which occurred during the recession of 2008 and 2009, when 3.9 million adults lost insurance,” [the Times reports](#). “The nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation has estimated that 27 million Americans have lost coverage in the pandemic; that study took into account family members of the insured. Another analysis, published Monday by the Urban Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, projected that by the end of 2020, 10.1 million people will no longer have employer-sponsored health insurance or coverage that was tied to a job they lost because of the pandemic.”

Workers are being pushed to the brink as they continue to wait for their delayed unemployment checks.

“Alexis Herdez has been filing for unemployment every week since April, shortly after she was laid off on her first day of work at a bridal clothing

store. But more than two months later, the 23-year-old in Lexington, Ky., has yet to receive any payment,” [Eli Rosenberg reports](#). “Four months into the worst recession since the Great Depression, tens of thousands of workers like Herdez across the country have filed for jobless claims but have yet to receive payments. Many are now in dire financial straits. ‘We’ve been only able to make half payments on everything,’ Herdez said ... ‘We bought a large amount of groceries and have been taking things out of the freezer, but as the weeks go by, it’s hard to figure out whether to pay bills or whether we have enough food to last the week.’ ... The ongoing delays are the result of a confluence of crises, experts say. A flood of new jobless applications — about 50 million — has overwhelmed state unemployment offices over the past four months. The agencies themselves are hampered by years of neglect.”

The U.S. budget deficit shattered a one-month record in June after spending outpaced revenue by \$864 billion.

“In June 2019, the budget deficit was just \$8 billion,” [Jeff Stein reports](#). “Federal spending rose to more than \$1.1 trillion in June, more than twice what the U.S. government spends in a typical month. The amount of tax revenue collected by the federal government remained largely flat, at about \$240 billion, in part because the Treasury Department delayed the tax filing deadline until July. The huge surge in June pushed the budget deficit for the first nine months of the fiscal year to \$2.7 trillion.”

Small-business owners are giving up.

“The resurgence of the virus, especially in states such as Texas, Florida and California that had begun to reopen, has introduced a far darker reality for many small businesses: Their temporary closures might become permanent. Nearly 66,000 businesses have folded since March 1, according to data from Yelp,” [the Times reports](#).

The Trump presidency

 “Too Much and Never Enough,” the controversial new book by Mary Trump about President Trump, her uncle. (Jim Lo Scalzo/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock)

“Too Much and Never Enough,” the controversial new book by Mary Trump about President Trump, her uncle. (Jim Lo Scalzo/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock)

Trump’s niece can publish her book about the president and his family, a judge ruled.

“A state court judge on Monday issued an 11th-hour ruling affirming Simon & Schuster's right to publish an explosive new book by Trump's niece, issuing a decision that prioritizes the First Amendment over a dated confidentiality agreement among members of the Trump family,” [Shayna Jacobs reports](#). **“The book by Mary L. Trump — ‘Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World’s Most Dangerous Man’ — is slated for release [today].** Some copies already have been distributed, and the work is already considered a bestseller. ... Mary Trump, 55, was sued by her uncle Robert Trump, the president’s brother, in an effort to block publication. He had accused her of violating a confidentiality agreement in an inheritance case settled two decades ago. ... In Dutchess County, N.Y., Justice Hal Greenwald said that Simon & Schuster had no obligations under the family’s nondisclosure agreement and that constitutional law ‘trumps contracts.’ ...

Trump was granted a second 45-day extension to file his personal financial disclosure forms.

“The forms are supposed to detail Trump’s income, debt, stock holdings and outstanding loans for 2019. They were originally due May 15, but Trump got an extension until the end of June,” [David Fahrenthold and Anu Narayanswamy report](#). “On June 29, Scott Gast, deputy counsel to the president, granted Trump a second extension, until Aug. 13, according to the letter. Federal law allows only two such extensions. Gast’s letter said that the extension was given for ‘good cause,’ but did not specify what that cause was. A White House spokesperson said Trump ‘has a complicated

report, and he's been focused on addressing the coronavirus and other matters.”

House Democrats will revive a legal effort to get Trump's financial records.

“In a filing late Monday, the House's top lawyer, Douglas Letter, urged the [Supreme Court] to immediately effectuate their July 9 ruling on the House's subpoena for Trump's records. Once the ruling is in force, the House can return to the U.S. District Court judge who initially heard the case and ask for renewed consideration,” [Politico reports](#). Last week, “the justices devised a four-part test to determine whether an effort by Congress to obtain the personal papers of a sitting president is proper – and they urged the lower courts to apply this test on any future attempt by lawmakers to get [the records] ... Letter noted that the [ruling] would normally take effect on Aug. 3 without the intervention of the justices. The lower courts can't begin to take up the effort until the Supreme Court ruling takes hold, and the House is urging the justices to make that happen as quickly as possible.”

More Republicans are dropping out of the Jacksonville convention.

“Senators **Roy Blunt** of Missouri and **Pat Roberts** of Kansas are planning to skip the Republican National Convention next month,” the [Times reports](#). “Representatives **Mario Diaz-Balart** and **Francis Rooney** of Florida are sticking with their plans not to attend, even though the convention is now in their home state. **Marco Rubio**, Florida's senior senator, has not committed to attending. Neither has **John Thune** of South Dakota, the second-ranking Senate Republican, or Representative **Liz Cheney** of Wyoming, the third-ranking House Republican. ... ‘Everybody just assumes no one is going,’ said Representative **Darin LaHood** of Illinois, an honorary state co-chairman for the **Trump campaign**. Mr. LaHood was one of eight House members – from

Illinois, New York, Arizona, Indiana and Michigan — [who said] they did not plan to attend. ...

“Still, even as growing numbers of elected leaders express wariness about attending, a strong contingent of Republican National Committee members — many of whom have their political fortunes tied to Mr. Trump — say they still plan to go. In interviews, more than a dozen of them said they were committed, even ‘proud,’ to celebrate the renomination of Mr. Trump. ... The result may be a crowd that is far Trumpier than in 2016 ... ‘It’s a risk you have to take,’ said Morton Blackwell, 80, an R.N.C. member from Virginia who has attended every party convention since he was the youngest elected delegate backing Barry Goldwater in 1964. ‘You take risks every day. You drive down the street and a cement truck could crash into you. You can’t not do what you have to do because of some possibility of a bad result.’”

Other news that should be on your radar



Alabama and Texas are holding Senate runoffs today, while Maine is holding House and Senate primaries.

“Alabama Republicans, hoping to reclaim a seat they fumbled away three years ago to Sen. Doug Jones (D), have been lukewarm about renominating **Jeff Sessions**, the former U.S. attorney general, for his old Senate seat and instead are leaning toward former Auburn University football coach **Tommy Tuberville**. And in Texas, Democrats appeared headed toward easily nominating **M.J. Hegar**, an Air Force veteran whose biography nearly helped her win a House seat in 2018, to take on Republican Sen. John Cornyn as he tries to win a fourth term. But a late charge from state Sen. Royce West has prompted outside support to pour in to try to bring Hegar, favored by Democrats in Washington, across the finish line,” [Paul Kane reports](#).

“Whoever emerges from the Sessions-Tuberville race ... will be functionally broke. GOP strategists believe Jones, who had raised more than \$15 million by March 30 and has been spending on largely positive ads, will immediately launch a sharp negative attack on the Republican nominee, who will be scrambling to raise money for the general election. ... Maine holds its House and Senate primaries Tuesday ... **Sara Gideon, the State House speaker, is the prohibitive favorite to win the Democratic nomination to challenge Sen. Susan Collins (R) in the general election.**”

Democrats are setting their sights on expanding their hold on the House amid GOP troubles. “The shift in fortunes marks a turnabout for House Democrats, who originally predicted trouble for 31 members representing seats Trump won in 2016,” [Rachael Bade reports](#). “But Trump’s political standing in many of those same districts has fallen, as Biden has taken a clear lead in public polling. Plus, 37 of the most vulnerable front-line Democrats raised more than \$500,000 last quarter, with 34 now stockpiling more than \$2 million cash on hand, according to the DCCC.”

In the primary elections held so far this year, at least 65,000 mail-in ballots were rejected for tardiness.

“At least 65,000 absentee or mail-in ballots have been rejected because they arrived past the deadline, often through no fault of the voter,” [NPR reports](#). “While the numbers are relatively small — around 1% in most states — they could prove crucial in a close election, especially one in which many more voters are expected to cast absentee and mail-in ballots to avoid going to the polls during a pandemic.”

Prosecutors say Ghislaine Maxwell used former British military personnel as personal security.

Maxwell, who is accused of grooming girls for Jeffrey Epstein, “sought to evade FBI detection by using former British military personnel as personal security and wrapping her cellphone in tin foil in an apparent anti-tracing attempt, federal prosecutors alleged. When the FBI moved on Maxwell at her estate in New Hampshire about two weeks ago, agents had to break down the door and found Maxwell hiding in a room in the interior of the home, according to a new court filing from the government opposing her release on bail,” [Shayna Jacobs reports](#). “The U.S. attorney’s office for the Southern District of New York has maintained that Maxwell, who has citizenship in three countries including the United States, is a flight risk. She was tracked down at the secluded estate in Bradford, N.H., and arrested July 2.”

- Britain will bar Chinese tech giant Huawei from its 5G wireless networks in what is a major blow to the company and a win for the Trump administration, which has been pushing allies to shun the company. ([Ellen Nakashima and William Booth](#))
- A former secretary of Seoul Mayor Park Won-soon, who killed himself last week, accused him of sexually harassing her over a four-year period. ([Min Joo Kim](#))

Social media speed read

After a judge ruled that she's free to talk about her family and her tell-all book, Mary Trump shared a nod to another hectic week in Washington:



This was her first tweet in two years.

Trump said a Biden presidency will be terrible for TV ratings:



And New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) unveiled this poster illustrating New York's experience during the pandemic. Details include Trump as the "man in the moon" and something called the "boyfriend cliff":



Videos of the day

Trevor Noah said the coronavirus is the only thing in 2020 "that hasn't been canceled":



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