



2022-2023 SEASON

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Agatha Christie's
MURDER
ON THE
ORIENT EXPRESS

Adapted for the stage by
KEN LUDWIG

September 23 - October 8

Curtain @ 7:30 pm | Matinees 2:00 pm
MainStage Theatre (148 E. 8th St.)

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OLD TOWN PLAYHOUSE



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murder on their mind...”



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OLD TOWN PLAYHOUSE

Agatha Christie's
MURDER
ON THE
ORIENT EXPRESS
Adapted for the Stage by
KEN LUDWIG

Directed by Anthony Ascione

CAST

Hercule Poirot - **Teddy House**
Monsieur Bouc - **Tom Cole**
Mary Debenham - **Claudia Riedy**
Hector Macqueen - **Sam Whalen**
Princess Dragomiroff - **Nan Worthington**
Greta Ohlsonn - **Ashley Mugnolo**
Countess Andrenyi - **Celeste Burns**
Helen Hubbard - **Cathy Louis**
Colonel Arbuthnot - **Aaron Wineman**
Samuel Ratchett - **Trevor VanAssche**
Daisy Armstrong - **Henley Mugnolo**
Michel the Conductor/Head Waiter - **Ed Mulcahy**

Originally staged by McCarter Theater Center, Princeton, NJ
Emily Mann, Artistic Director, Timothy J. Shields, Managing Director.
The production subsequently transferred to Hartford Stage, Hartford, CT
Darko Tresnjak, Artistic Director, Michael Stotts, Managing Director

"Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express" is presented by
arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.

www.concordtheatricals.com

OLD TOWN PLAYHOUSE



*"All of the world is a stage, and all of the men and women in it merely players.
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"As You Like It" Act II Scene VII - Shakespeare*

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I love a good mystery. I love feeling smart when I figure out the solution early on and I also love being baffled the entire time right up until the final reveal. I love the agency a mystery gives to me, the audience member, to either participate or to sit back and to allow myself to be entertained. Agatha Christie is the master mystery writer because she understood how to balance those two things perfectly, and I tried to take a similar approach with my directing because I believe that the theatre is a place where anyone can be anything they want. So whether you want to be a detective alongside Monsieur Poirot or just sit back and be a passenger, I hope the end result is the same: that you will have enjoyed a great story.

I would be utterly remiss if I didn't thank every single member of the team who helped me bring my first mainstage show to life, but there is nowhere near enough to space so here are just a few: Danielle Hartley, Denni Don Hunting, Laura Ortiz-LaVelle, Kerr Anderson, Rick Porter. I don't even have the words for how much I appreciate you and everyone else who got on this crazy train with me all the way back in Istanbul and have stayed with me here to Calais. My humblest and most grateful thanks.

Anthony "Chwaz" Ascione, Director
Murder on the Orient Express

SPECIAL THANKS

Joseph Levesque - Train Station Announcer
Ben May, Travis Troxell

OLD TOWN PLAYHOUSE

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director - **Anthony (Chwaz) Ascione**

Director's Mentor - **Denni Don Hunting**

Stage Manager - **Danielle Hartley**

Assistant Stage Manager - **Rick Porter**

Producer - **Laura Ortiz-LaVelle**

Set Designer - **Kerr Anderson**

Design Construction Crew

Nancy Albrecht, John Baylor, Colin Bohash,

Deb Bowman, Bob Coltman, Chuck Moeser,

Jens Hensel, John Herbst, Bill Hershey, Jeff Kroeger,

Don Kuehlhorn, Dan Mello, Arnie Taddia,

Dan Showalter, Dale Wentzloff

Paint Crew

Jill Bert, Rachel Creamer, Bernadette Groppuso,

Judy Heffron, Terri Kuhar, Annie Moeser,

Clare Shipstead, Lori Wheldon, Michelle Zastawny

Lighting Designer - **Bill Fishburn**

Light Run

Colleen Hill-Rakunas

Costume Designer - **Kathy Verstraete**

Costume Assistants

Glenn Gauthier, Diane Hubert, Terr Kuhar

Sound Designer - **Gary Bolton**

Set Dressing Consultant - **Karen Gardner**

Properties - **Christopher Dalio**

Running Crew

Patrick Cotner, Michelle Perez, Jacob Pointon

Artistic Committee Liaison - **Terri Heffron**

Artistic Committee Liaison Shadow - **Andrea Makarauskas**

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CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Celeste Burns - Countess Andrenyi is honored to make her Traverse City debut at the Old Town Playhouse. A recent transplant to the TC area, Celeste has previously performed on stages in and around Chicago, Illinois. She would like to thank Chwaz and OTP for the opportunity, and Tom for his endless support and handling of so many bedtimes.

Tom Cole - Monsieur Bouc 52 years ago, I would never have imagined I'd be here. 26 productions-comedies, farces, drama, mysteries, musicals, Shakespeare, Moliere (a wet nurse!), and Readers-with 9 theater companies, and I'm still treading the boards! In addition, roles with props, lights, and back stage have made working with these wonderful, positive people part of my extended family. Thanks to you all.

Teddy House - Hercule Poirot This is Teddy's second time on OTP's MainStage, debuting in 2014's *The Game's Afoot* as Inspector Goring. She also was the assistant director for 2019's *Moon Over Buffalo*. Additionally, Teddy's a veteran actor and director with Glen Arbor Players, since 2011, and OTP's Aged to Perfection (ATP) both readers' theater companies, in her spare time she writes, and studies the history of Ancient Egypt.

Cathy Louis - Mrs. Hubbard is so excited to be on stage with this fabulous company of actors! She feels lucky to be appearing in her 3rd MainStage production since becoming involved with OTP in 2018. She appeared in *Love, Loss & What I Wore* (Ensemble) in 2020, and *Cinderella* (Madame) in Spring 2022 as well as two Aged to Perfection full length productions in 2018 and 2019. Thanks, and love to our amazing Director, Anthony (Chwaz) Ascione, for seeing her in this role (She loves it!), and to her supportive family, near (her stellar husband) and far (her kids, son-and-daughters-in-law and the grand babies).

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OLD TOWN PLAYHOUSE

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Ashley Mugnolo - Greta Ohlsonn makes her non-musical debut with OTP after a season of back-to-back musicals with *Cinderella* and *Chicago*. Ashley joined OTP in the 2019/2020 season as Matthews in *Elf*. Ashley loves how OTP has been a place to celebrate her entire family's love for the arts, with two of her three kids performing in OTP shows over the past year.

Henley Mugnolo - Daisy Armstrong lends her voiceover talents to the cast as she brings the memory of Daisy Armstrong to life in her Mainstage premier. Most recently Henley took the stage as the Bread maker and Agrhaban Acrobat in the Young Companies *Alladin*. She is excited to lend her voice to the show alongside her mother Ashley. She is also looking forward to auditions for OTPYC this season.

Ed Mulcahy - Michel/Head Waiter has been with the Playhouse since the fall of 1999, when he played Bertrum Cates in *Inherit the Wind*. Since then, he has gone on to act in more than a dozen main stage productions and has directed more than a few more. He has also held a seat on the board of Artistic directors. Ed is a chef, and when not behind the stove, enjoys camping and tending to his gardens.

Claudia Riedy - Mary Debenham has performed in community theater, choirs, A cappella groups and even in a hallway band and is excited to participate in her first Old Town Playhouse performance. As a lifelong fan of Agatha Christie, she is thrilled to bring this story and this character to the stage. She would like to thank her husband, family, and friends for their support and encouragement to return to performing.

Trevor Van Assche - Samuel Ratchett is in his second production at OTP. His previous show, *Cinderella*, was such a fun experience for him that he decided to get involved once again. Not a stranger to adventure, Community theatre has been a new kind of journey for him. Trevor is excited to be a part of the production and is thankful for the opportunity to be involved with the OTP.

OLD TOWN PLAYHOUSE

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Sam Whalen - Hector Macqueen is very excited to be a part of Murder on the Orient Express with Old Town Playhouse. They recently had their debut with OTP in the show *Love, Loss and What I Wore* with several roles within the show. Sam has been involved with community theater since she was very little, from Maria in *Loves Labours Lost* with the Dogwood Theater to Don John in *Much Ado about Nothing* with Shakespeare in the Park. Sam studied Theatre Performance and received her BA with a focus in acting and stage combat from Alma College. During their time at Alma appeared in many main stage performances including Lauren in *From Up Here*, Lena in *The Rimers of Eldritch*, Betty Paris in *The Crucible* as well as the One Act Festival including Female lead in *Scripted*, Female lead in *Compatible*. Sam was also a combat instructor for *Peter Pan* with Dogwood Theater. She wants to thank her friends and family for always supporting her passion.

Aaron Wineman - Colonel Arbuthnot is an actor, musician and lyricist. Aaron graduated from CMU in 2011, where he studied theatre. Aaron spent 5.5yrs in New York City performing in plays, sketches, short films and playing bass guitar in the rock and roll band, The Permanent Revolution. Acting credits include: *Wendy/Gigi*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *A Condom of Ice and Fire*, *The Pillowman*, *The Permanent Collection*. Bass guitar credits: "God is Dead"(Composer/lyricist), "Beautiful Bird", "Mask", "Pushing Daisies", "Sharon (On a Motorcycle)". Aaron would like to thank Elton, Sindi, Levi, Isaac, Bekah, Sarah and Katie, for their love and support. Thanks family!

Nan Worthington - Princess Dragomiroff has been an active member of the OTP community since she moved to Traverse City 41 years ago. A retired NICU nurse, she now spends her time playing the harp, gardening, knitting, and sewing whimsical things, swimming, scouring estate sales for unique treasures, spending time with her 6 grandchildren and she is delighted to be a Princess!

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KEN LUDWIG BIOGRAPHY

Ken Ludwig has had six shows on Broadway, seven in London's West End, and many of his works have become a standard part of the American repertoire. His 28 plays and musicals have been performed in over 30 countries in more than 20 languages and are produced throughout the United States every night of the year.

Lend Me a Tenor won two Tony Awards and was called "one of the classic comedies of the 20th century by The Washington Post. *Crazy For You* was on Broadway for five years and won the Tony and Olivier Awards for Best Musical.

In addition, he has won the Edgar Award for Best Mystery of the Year, two Laurence Olivier Awards, two Helen Hayes Awards, and the Edwin Forrest Award for Contributions to the American Theater. His plays have starred, among others, Alec Baldwin, Carol Burnett, Tony Shaloub, Joan Collins and Hal Holbrook.

His stage version of *Murder on the Orient Express* was written expressly at the request of the Agatha Christie Estate, and his latest play, *Dear Jack, Dear Louise*, won the 2020 Charles MacArthur Award for Best New Play of the Year and is optioned for Broadway.

His book *How To Teach Your Children Shakespeare*, published by Penguin Random House, won the Falstaff Award for Best Shakespeare Book of the Year, and his essays are published in the Yale Review.

He is a graduate of Harvard and Cambridge and is a frequent guest speaker for groups as varied as The Oxford-Cambridge Society, The Jane Austen Society of North America, The Folger Shakespeare Library, and The Baker Street Irregulars.

For more information, see his website at www.kenludwig.com.

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Myer**
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**Kevin
Rhodes**
conductor

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BEETHOVEN 7**



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Sords**
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The Cathedral Barn at Historic Barns Park, Traverse City
City Opera House, downtown Traverse City
Lars Hockstad Auditorium, Traverse City

OLD TOWN PLAYHOUSE



ABOUT DAME AGATHA CHRISTIE

Best-selling author Agatha Christie published her first novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, in 1920, and went on to become one of the most famous writers in history, with mysteries like *Murder at the Vicarage*, *Partners in Crime* and *Sad Cypress*. She sold billions of copies of her work and was also a noted playwright and romance author.

Christie was born Agatha Mary Clarissa Miller on September 15, 1890, in Torquay, Devon, in the southwest part of England. The youngest of three siblings, she was educated at home by her mother, who encouraged her daughter to write. As a child, Christie enjoyed fantasy play and creating characters, and, when she was 16, she moved to Paris for a time to study vocals and piano.

In 1914, she wed Colonel Archibald Christie, a Royal Flying Corps pilot, and took up nursing during World War I. She published her first book, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, in 1920; the story focused on the murder of a rich heiress and introduced readers to one of Christie's most famous characters—Belgian detective Hercule Poirot.

In 1926, Christie released *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, a hit which was later marked as a genre classic and one of the author's all-time favorites. She dealt with tumult that same year, however, as her mother died and her husband revealed that he was in a relationship with another woman. Traumatized by the revelation, Christie disappeared only to be discovered by authorities several days later at a Harrogate hotel, registered under the name of her husband's mistress.

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OLD TOWN PLAYHOUSE

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Christie would recover, with her and Archibald divorcing in 1928. In 1930, she married archaeology professor Max Mallowan, with whom she traveled on several expeditions, later recounting her trips in the 1946 memoir ***Come, Tell Me How You Live***. The year of her new nuptials also saw the release of ***Murder at the Vicarage***, which became another classic and introduced readers to Miss Jane Marple, an enquiring village lady.

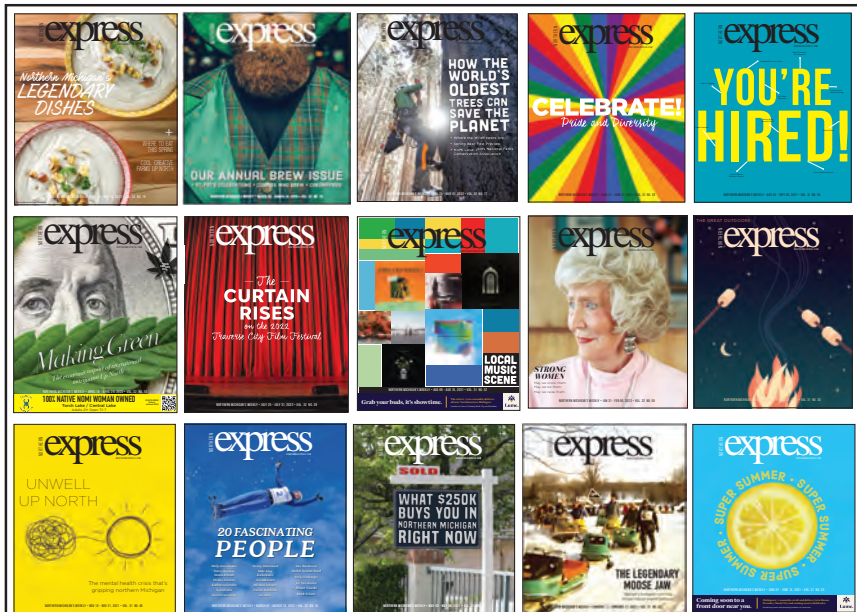
Poirot and Marple are Christie's most well-known detectives, with the two featured in dozens of novels and short stories. Poirot made the most appearances in Christie's work in

titles that included ***Ackroyd, The Mystery of the Blue Train*** (1928) and ***Death in the Clouds*** (1935). Miss Marple has been featured in books like ***The Moving Finger*** (1942) and ***A Pocket Full of Rye*** (1953), and been played on screen by actresses like Angela Lansbury, Helen Hayes and Geraldine McEwan. Other notable Christie characters include Tuppence and Tommy Beresford, Colonel Race, Parker Pyne and Ariadne Oliver.

Christie wrote more than 70 detective novels as well as short fiction. Christie's success has earned her titles like the "Queen of Crime" and the "Queen of Mystery." She is one of the top-selling authors in history, with her combined works selling more than 2 billion copies worldwide. Christie was a renowned playwright as well, with works like ***The Hollow*** (1951) and ***Verdict*** (1958). Her play ***The Mousetrap*** opened in 1952 at the Ambassador Theatre and—at more than 8,800 showings during 21 years—holds the record for the longest unbroken run in a London theater. Additionally, several of Christie's works have become popular movies, including ***Murder on the Orient Express*** (1974) and ***Death on the Nile*** (1978).

Christie was made a dame in 1971. In 1974, she made her last public appearance for the opening night of the play version of ***Murder on the Orient Express***. Christie died on January 12, 1976.

OLD TOWN PLAYHOUSE



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OLD TOWN PLAYHOUSE

PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES

Anthony "Chwaz" Ascione - Director *Murder on the Orient Express* is Chwaz's adult MainStage directing debut, but he has over 20 years of experience as a performer and a degree in forensic anthropology so a play about a murder investigation is right in his wheelhouse. Most recently he worked with the OTP Young Company as the director of *Disney's Aladdin KIDS* and the costume designer for *Willy Wonka JR.*

Christopher Cronin - Properties is a mammal of swamps and woodlands. He returned to his native freshwater habitat a decade ago after extended time in the brackish swamp and the dream of the 90s is alive swamp. Book fact: Christopher learned about the concept of props from Emma, in *Moominsummer Madness* by Tove Janssen, when he was six years old.

Danielle Hartley - Stage Manager Danielle appeared on stage last season on stage in *Godspell* and as Mona in *Chicago*, and just played Nick Bottom in Mashup Rock and Roll Musical's *A Midsummer Night's California Dream* in August. She previously managed the OTP stage for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2018, and *The Who's Tommy* in 2019. She also had the opportunity to stage manage for Parallel 45's *The Alphabet Experience* in 2019 at the City Opera House. She's very excited for her friend, Chwaz, in his directorial debut. She's endlessly grateful to her friends, family, co-workers, and husband for their support.

Denni Don Hunting - Director Mentor is a 37-year OTP volunteer. She has served in many areas both on stage and backstage. Her favorite areas have been actor, stage manager and director and teacher with the OTP Young Company. She is the OTP Stage Manager Chair. She was inducted into The OTP Hall Of Fame 2011 and received OTP Young Company Instructor Emeritus 2020. Directing shows about women, *Steel Magnolias*, *On the Verge*, *Calendar Girls*, *Dirty Blond*, *Love Loss and What I Wore*, and *The Savannah Sipping Society* are very dear to her heart. She mentor volunteers in each show. Some of these folks are new to OTP; many have been volunteers but want to learn new...

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OLD TOWN PLAYHOUSE

PRODUCTION BIOGRAPHIES

(continued from previous page)

...theatre roles. "There are no words to express how wonderful it is to have OTP open and presenting performances for our community again! The great old building is smiling!"

Laura Ortiz-LaVelle - Producer joined the Old Town Playhouse in April of 2021 as Business Manager. Prior to coming to OTP, Laura was the Events Manager for the Ramsdell Theatre in Manistee MI. To get herself better "acquainted" with the theatre and to learn what it takes to put on a performance, Laura worked as Assistant Director Trainee for *The Savannah Sipping Society* and was pleased to join the Production Team of *Murder on the Orient Express* as Producer. If you asked Laura how her experience has been she would say, "the entire production team and cast have been so informative, patient and has given me a better understanding of what goes on behind the scenes. It has been a complete joy working with this team"!

Rick Porter - Assistant Stage Manager This is Rick's second show at Old Town Playhouse, and he is very excited to be back! He studied theater at Adrian College where he worked on several shows as an actor, designer, and on the crew. More recently Rick worked as an Assistant Stage Manager with Redtwist Theater in Chicago. His favorite shows that he worked on were *The Laramie Project*, *Chicago*, *True West*, and *Doubt*. Love and thank you to his parents Christopher and Marjorie, and his best friend Philm.

Kathy Verstraete - Costume Design has been upstairs in her "second home," the shop, for many, many years. Kathy has served as Costume Chair, Gala Chair, as well as numerous other odd jobs around the Playhouse. She is honored to have been Volunteer of the Year and has been inducted into the Hall of Fame She continues to work and design not only on mainstage but for the Young Company which is the heart and joy of the future. She continues to thank those that let her continue to play with the people and things she loves.

OLD TOWN PLAYHOUSE

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BOSTON BRASS

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APRIL 21, 2023 - 8PM

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TINA - THE TINA
TURNER MUSICAL**

APRIL 22, 2023 - 2PM

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CONTEMPORARY DANCE**

APRIL 28, 2023 - 8PM

**BROADWAY BOUND!
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JUNE 17, 2023 - 2PM



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OLD TOWN PLAYHOUSE

HOUSE RULES

EMERGENCY EXITS are located next to the left side of the stage at the front of the auditorium and at the rear the auditorium.

RESTROOMS are located in the Playhouse's lower level, in the hallway adjacent to the Schmuckal Theatre.

THE BOX OFFICE opens two hours prior to each performance.

SMOKING IS PROHIBITED throughout the building. Ashtrays can be found outdoors near the building's front and rear entrances.

YOUNG CHILDREN may attend this performance if they have tickets and are able to sit upright on their own in their seat (with or without a booster seat). Parents should choose seats where they are able to leave easily during the performance. One parent or other responsible adult must accompany each child at all times.

CELL PHONES AND BEEPERS must be turned off or silenced during the performance. Doctors and others on call may leave their names and seat location with an usher who notify the house manager.

UNAUTHORIZED PHOTOGRAPHY, AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDING are forbidden during all performances.

LATECOMERS will be seated at the discretion of the house manager and in consideration of the performance audience already seated. Latecomers are not entitled to refunds or ticket exchanges.

WIRELESS HEADSETS for the hearing impaired are available for all performances. Please see the House Manager if required.

ADDITIONAL PARKING is available in the Old Town Parking Deck located on Eighth Street, just west of the Old Town Playhouse and across the street.

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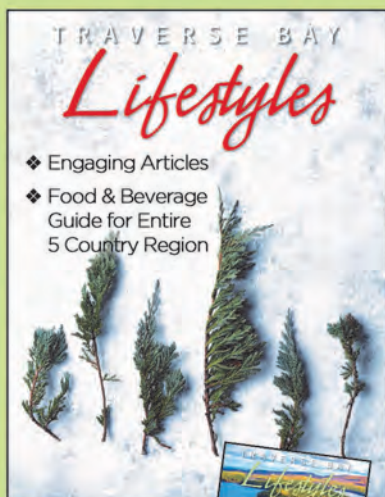
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OLD TOWN PLAYHOUSE

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