
MOVIE SERIES REVIEW: THE PURGE

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INTRODUCTION

The 'Purge' film series presents a dystopian scenario that has captured the imagination the of audience. It presents an alternate United States under the rule of the fictional New Founding Fathers of America (NFFA), featuring an annual event during which all crimes, including murder, are legalized for a 12-hour period. Initially promoted as a way for people to indulge in their dark desires, the movies progressively reveal a darker and much more sinister agenda.

The series begins with an experimental Purge in 2016 and the first official annual Purge in 2018. The NFFA, an extreme political party, utilizes the Purge to manipulate society, asserting that it helps maintain lawfulness throughout the year by allowing citizens to 'purge' their violent urges during this sanctioned time. However, the reality is far grimmer. The government sponsors violent groups and cults, arming them to target the most vulnerable and marginalized segments of society, particularly the impoverished, who are more likely to resort to crime out of desperation. The Purge effectively becomes a tool for social cleansing, enabling the powerful elite to eliminate those they consider undesirable. This starkly highlights the theme of class warfare and the brutal consequences of such a policy.

In 2040, the NFFA is ousted from power, resulting in a five-year halt to the annual Purge. Nevertheless, in 2048, they are re-elected, leading to the outbreak of "The Forever Purge" in 2049, underscoring the NFFA's resilience in holding onto power. This recurring cycle of violence and oppression serves as a cautionary tale, warning against the dangers of extreme political ideologies and the erosion of civil liberties in the name of social order.

The concept of "The Purge" draws inspiration from historical events and traditions, such as the Roman festival of Saturnalia, where social norms were temporarily upended, and revelry and

lawlessness prevailed. However, the films take this concept to a horrifying extreme, portraying the catastrophic consequences for society.

The series offers not only a thrilling and unsettling experience but also a thought-provoking commentary on issues like social inequality, the abuse of power, and the ramifications of extreme ideologies. It serves as a symbol of the crucial need to safeguard the principles of justice and equality within any society to prevent the emergence of such dystopian scenarios.

THE FIRST PURGE (2018 set in 2016)

The events of "The First Purge" take place on Staten Island, New York, which serves as the setting for the first Purge experiment. This selection of a single locale enables a thorough investigation of the Purge's effects on a particular neighborhood.

In 2014, the New Founding Fathers of America (NFFA), a formidable political party, ascended to power in the United States. Their ascent is characterized by the introduction of the Purge as a sociological experiment to gauge its societal effects. The film unveils a sinister government agenda as it covertly orchestrates the events of the Purge Night.

The NFFA deploys mercenaries disguised as ordinary citizens to incite violence and chaos. This manipulation is orchestrated to create the appearance of a successful Purge and rationalize its continuation. It serves as a stark commentary on the manipulative power of those in authority, who can mold narratives to suit their interests.

"The First Purge" chronicles the journeys of several characters, each wrestling with the moral and ethical complexities of the Purge. The main character, a community activist, is resolute in safeguarding her community and preventing unchecked violence. Meanwhile, a drug lord on the island seizes the opportunity to settle scores and reap profits. A family caught in the midst of the turmoil faces agonizing choices for survival.

The movie functions as a reflective lens on societal issues, raising questions about the repercussions of permitting individuals to act upon their most violent inclinations and the impact on communities, particularly those less privileged. It also underscores how government policies

can disproportionately affect vulnerable and marginalized groups.

A pivotal moment in the film occurs with the revelation that the government actively exacerbates violence by deploying mercenaries to stoke chaos. This exposes the NFFA's concealed agenda, which extends beyond the proclaimed benefits of the Purge.

"The First Purge" presents a thought-provoking and intense exploration of the Purge's origins, exposing the deep-seated corruption and manipulation within a government that exploits a night of anarchy for its own sinister purposes. The movie effectively underscores how extreme policies and government manipulation can yield dire consequences for society, underscoring the imperative of upholding justice, equality, and ethical governance.

THE PURGE (2013 set in 2022)

The narrative of "The Purge" revolves around the Sandin family, a typical American household living in an upscale suburban neighborhood. James Sandin, the family's provider, earns his livelihood as a successful security system salesman, specializing in products designed to safeguard homes during The Purge. In their household are James' wife, Mary, and their two children, Charlie and Zoey. As the ominous evening of The Purge approaches, the Sandins opt to secure their heavily fortified home, confident that their shelter will keep them safe and far removed from the violent chaos unfolding outside. They are resolute in their plan to wait out the annual event.

However, their sense of security is abruptly shattered when Charlie, their teenage son, spots a wounded homeless man named Henry through their surveillance system. Motivated by a deep sense of compassion and moral obligation, Charlie disregards the family's strict Purge night rules by disabling the security system and welcoming Henry into their home. Shortly after this fateful act, an ominous group of armed and masked Purgers gathers outside the Sandin residence, led by a menacing yet outwardly polite figure known as the Polite Leader. Their demand is clear: release Henry, or they will forcibly breach the house. James grapples with a profound moral dilemma.

He must choose between safeguarding their uninvited guest and defying the threatening Purge participants outside or relinquishing Henry to the hostile mob. As tensions rise and the weight of

life-altering choices bears down upon them, the Sandin family embarks on a tumultuous journey through the night.

As the hours pass, the Sandins are thrust into a relentless battle for survival, defending their home against the unrelenting attackers who are determined to gain entry. Amid this life-or-death struggle, the family members are forced to confront their own ethical decisions, coming face to face with the grim consequences of The Purge, both on a personal level and as a striking commentary on the state of society at large.

THE PURGE: ANARCHY (2014 set in 2023)

The movie builds upon the concept introduced in the previous film and expands the narrative to provide a broader view of this dystopian society.

It analyses the story to some key characters to explore its various themes. Eva and Cali's story centers on their struggle to survive in their impoverished neighborhood. When Eva's father offers himself as a Purge target in exchange for financial support for his family, they find themselves in grave danger. Shane and Liz's relationship is tested as they are pursued by a group of menacing purgers after their car breaks down.

They must find a way to escape and stay alive. Leo Barnes' true mission is gradually unveiled as he crosses paths with Eva and Cali. Initially, he appears to be a vigilante Purger, but his motivations run deeper. The characters are forced to make morally complex decisions as they join forces to survive the night. Their alliance is unexpected, driven by the necessity of sticking together in a world where trust is in short supply. As the night unfolds, the group encounters various perils, including organized Purgers, paramilitary squads, and rebel forces led by Carmelo Jones, who seeks to resist the NFFA regime.

The film highlights the stark economic disparities within the society, as the wealthy often exploit the Purge for their own sadistic entertainment, while the poor and vulnerable are left to fend for themselves. It also highlights the stark economic disparities within the society, as the wealthy often exploit the Purge for their own sadistic entertainment, while the poor and vulnerable are left to fend for themselves. The introduction of Carmelo Jones and his rebel group adds a layer of

resistance to the narrative, showing how some people are willing to fight back against the oppressive NFFA regime. The characters' moral choices during the Purge night are central to the story, illustrating the lengths people will go to protect their loved ones and survive in a dangerous world.

THE PURGE: ELECTION YEAR (2016 set in 2040)

"The Purge: Election Year" is the third installment in the "Purge" film series. The film primarily revolves around the character Senator Charlie Roan, who is running for President of the United States on an anti-Purge platform. The story unfolds as Senator Roan becomes a target for assassination during the annual Purge night, prompting her to seek protection from her head of security, Leo Barnes, who survived a previous Purge and is now working as a Secret Service agent.

The film follows their journey to survive the night and uncover the conspiracy behind her targeting. Along the way, they encounter a diverse group of people affected by the Purge, including a deli owner and a revolutionary group determined to end the NFFA's rule. "The Purge: Election Year" continues to explore the chilling dystopian premise of the earlier films but with a more politically charged and overtly satirical narrative. The movie introduces political elements, with Senator Roan campaigning to end the Purge. This serves as a satirical commentary on the politics of fear and the exploitation of societal divisions by those in power.

The NFFA's resistance to change and their manipulation of the Purge for political gain are portrayed as morally corrupt. The film continues to address social issues, particularly class and race. The Purge disproportionately impacts marginalized and vulnerable communities, and this is highlighted in the characters and situations encountered throughout the movie. It underscores the idea that the Purge is a tool for the wealthy to maintain control and eliminate the underprivileged.

"The Purge: Election Year" delves into the personal growth of its characters. Senator Roan transforms from a political candidate into a fighter for justice. Leo Barnes, the protagonist from the previous film, is given a more nuanced role as he grapples with his past and his duty to protect the senator. The tension created by the pursuit and survival aspects of the plot keeps the audience engaged.

Senator Roan survives the Purge night and is elected President. She vows to end the Purge, signifying a potential shift away from the NFFA's oppressive rule. It offers a glimmer of hope for change and the rejection of a violent and authoritarian society. The screen fades away to media reports showing nation wide protests in favour of reinstating the purge.

THE FOREVER PURGE (2021 set in 2049)

In 2049, after Charlene Roan's presidency, the New Founding Fathers of America (NFFA) reinstated the Purge with its original rules, resulting in a surge of racial supremacy and nativism across the nation. Juan and Adela, a Mexican couple, crossed the border into Texas illegally to create a new life for themselves. They sought refuge in a walled migrant community as the 2049 Purge loomed, with armed security protecting them.

The migrant community successfully weathered the Purge, but when morning came, many of Juan and Adela's co-workers were conspicuously absent. A violent encounter with self-proclaimed Forever Purgers resulted in Adela and her boss, Darius, being arrested by the police for defending themselves.

Simultaneously, the Tucker family ranch fell into the hands of their white farmhands, who had become Forever Purgers, seeking to claim the property. In a selfless act, patriarch Caleb Tucker sacrificed himself, buying time for Juan and a co-worker named T.T. to rescue Caleb's son Dylan, Dylan's pregnant wife Cassie, and his sister Harper. Their escape coincided with the national declaration of a Forever Purge by civilians, disregarding the NFFA's orders to stand down.

Juan, T.T., and the others eventually found and rescued Adela and Darius from Purgers. Darius chose to stay behind in search of his family, while the rest fled from the burning city of Austin. At a gas station, they learned that Canada and Mexico had temporarily opened their borders to protect non-Purge civilians. This brief window of opportunity prompted the group to head for the Mexican border at El Paso.

As they arrived in a chaotic El Paso, the NFFA had imposed martial law to contain the violence, and Adela and Cassie were separated from the group by military forces.

Meanwhile, Juan, T.T., Dylan, and Harper were captured by the Purge Purification Force (PPF). The PPF's Alpha Leader offered Dylan and Harper a chance at survival if they executed T.T. and Juan. Canada and Mexico announced the early closure of their borders, leaving those seeking refuge vulnerable to the Purgers.

The diminished group eventually regrouped at a hidden safe-house maintained by a local Native American tribe. The Native leader offered to transport them as refugees across the border. In the desert, Juan, Adela, Dylan, the Native leader, and his men

made a defiant stand against the PPF, providing an opportunity for other refugees to escape. When they ran out of ammunition, they engaged the PPF in a brutal hand-to-hand combat, defeating them. The trio rejoined the others in a refugee camp across the Mexican border, where Dylan reunited with Harper and Cassie, and met his newborn daughter.

News reports indicated that the NFFA had dispatched troops but was crumbling under the uncontrolled violence. More than two million Americans had sought refuge across the Canadian and Mexican borders, and civilians across the United States were rallying to resist the Purgers.

SATURNALIA AND "THE PURGE"

The premise of the horror movie series "The Purge" is inspired by a real-life historical event: the ancient Roman festival known as Saturnalia. Surprisingly, the audacity of the real Saturnalia celebration was greater than that of the movie version.

The dystopian future depicted in "The Purge" is one in which all legal restrictions are temporarily lifted on one day each year, allowing people to act without consequence according to their most nefarious tendencies. With the usual law-abiding folks engaging in illegal actions like robberies, house invasions, physical harm, and even murder, this yearly event ushers in a complete 24-hour period of unrestrained mayhem, setting friends and neighbors against one another.

However, the concept of an annual interlude of lawlessness is not unique to contemporary cinema. Its historical roots harken back to the reality of Saturnalia. Saturnalia represented Rome's most exuberant and widely observed festival, spanning an entire week during which conventional

boundaries and prohibitions ceased to hold sway.

Participants in Saturnalia delighted in the unrestricted freedom to indulge their desires without the specter of severe retribution hanging over them. This ancient holiday, which had its beginnings in a single day of feasting millennia ago, experienced a transformational evolution to become a weeklong event marked by extravagance and excess. Saturnalia was created by the rulers of the period as a planned move to provide the public a legal avenue to vent their pent-up hatred and vexation, ostensibly resulting in fewer criminal offenses in the following year.

The similarities between "The Purge" and Saturnalia are striking, as both involve the temporary suspension of legal and societal norms for a set period of time. These events were strategically used by rulers to highlight the benefits of living under their rule.

The popularity of Saturnalia declined with the conversion of Emperor Constantine to Christianity in 312 AD, signifying the ascension of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire. Saturnalia was eventually superseded by a new Christian holiday, Christmas.

The prospect of a real-life "Purge" raises ethical and pragmatic concerns. According to Forbes Magazine, an authentic Purge would exacerbate socioeconomic disparities, normalise violent behaviour, and wreck havoc on the economy, potentially destabilising sectors such as the insurance industry, real estate market, and small businesses. ^{[1][2]}

ANALYSIS OF THE MOVIES

In the world of the "Purge" films, where a night of chaos is allowed by the government, there are important ideas about how laws and society work. These films, which tell a dark and thrilling story, also make us think about government power, how people agree to follow rules, the right and wrong of violence, fairness, and the idea of standing up to those in charge. These movies help us see how our own laws, ethics, and society can be tested and reshaped. The analysis of these films are as follows:-

¹ The linguist Institute, "The Infographics Show, The Purge Used to Be a Real Thing" www.lingq.com
<https://www.lingq.com/en/learn-english-online/courses/689816/the-purge-used-to-be-a-real-thing-4892045/>

² "Aurora, 1931 on JSTOR" <https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.31852975>

1. *"The Purge" (2013): Government Authority and Consent of the Governed*

In the inaugural film, "The Purge," the concept of the Purge is introduced, an event where all crime, including murder, is temporarily legal for 12 hours. The US government, represented by the New Founding Fathers of America (NFFA), claims that the Purge is a democratic exercise where citizens willingly participate.

- *Government Authority:* The film poses a fundamental challenge to the legitimacy of government authority. The NFFA's assertion that the Purge is a democratic exercise prompts viewers to question the very essence of a democratic system. It raises important questions about how far a government can go in the name of maintaining order and whether such extreme measures can ever be justified.
- *Consent of the Governed:* The concept of informed and voluntary consent of the governed is central to democratic governance. "The Purge" suggests that consent is manipulated through fear and propaganda. This manipulation of public opinion highlights the vulnerabilities of democratic systems when fear and manipulation are used to influence public opinion.
- *Social Inequality:* The film serves as an introduction to social inequality in the series. The Sandin family, who are well-off, become the target of a group of wealthy Purgers who view the event as an opportunity for sadistic entertainment. This stark contrast between the privileged and the less fortunate serves as a reflection of real-world disparities.
- *Moral Dilemma:* "The Purge" places the Sandin family in a moral dilemma. They must decide how far they are willing to go to protect themselves and their loved ones. The choices they make underscore the complex interplay between morality and legality in extreme circumstances, mirroring real-world ethical debates about self-defense, violence, and survival.

2. *"The Purge: Anarchy" (2014): The Role of Law Enforcement and Consequences of Extreme Political Ideologies*

In "The Purge: Anarchy," the narrative expands beyond a single household, following multiple characters as they navigate the chaos of the Purge night in Los Angeles.

- *Role of Law Enforcement:* The character of Leo Barnes, played by Frank Grillo, serves as a central figure grappling with the moral implications of his actions during the Purge. As a law enforcement officer, he faces the dilemma of upholding the law for the rest of the year while participating in the Purge. His character represents the inner conflict that law enforcement personnel may experience when confronted with an event that condones lawlessness.
- *Consequences of Extreme Political Ideologies:* The film delves into the consequences of extreme political ideologies. It is revealed that the Purge serves as a mechanism for population control, with the poor and vulnerable as its primary targets. This narrative explores the darker aspects of political ideologies that prioritize social cleansing and population reduction.
- *Resistance Movements:* "The Purge: Anarchy" introduces the character Carmelo Jones, who leads a resistance movement against the NFFA and the Purge. This portrayal highlights the potential for societal pushback against authoritarian rule and mirrors real-world scenarios where individuals and groups choose to resist oppressive regimes, even when the odds are stacked against them.

3. "The Purge: Election Year" (2016): Government Authority, Consent of the Governed, and Morality

In this installment, the political aspect of the Purge takes center stage as Senator Charlie Roan campaigns to end the annual event.

- *Government Authority:* "The Purge: Election Year" explores the political challenge to the NFFA's authority, represented by Senator Roan's campaign to end the Purge. Her campaign raises questions about the legitimacy of the government and its responsibility to protect citizens rather than subjecting them to state-sanctioned violence.

- *Consent of the Governed:* Senator Roan's campaign challenges the government's claim that the Purge is a democratic exercise. It highlights the role of informed and voluntary consent of the governed in a democratic society, emphasizing the importance of public trust in the government.
- *Morality:* The film delves into the moral aspect of state-sanctioned violence as Senator Roan's campaign represents an ethical stance against the Purge. It prompts discussions about the importance of upholding ethical principles in the face of legal systems that may condone violence.

4. *"The First Purge" (2018): Manipulation of Consent and Complex Morality*

The prequel, "The First Purge," takes us back to the origins of the Purge on Staten Island.

- *Manipulation of Consent:* The movie reveals how the government uses economic incentives to encourage participation in the Purge. This raises questions about the manipulation of consent through financial incentives, akin to the ways in which people may be coerced or induced into participating in extreme events in the real world.
- *Complex Morality:* The characters in "The First Purge" are placed in morally complex situations, emphasizing the intricate interplay between morality and legality. It underscores how individuals and communities must navigate their ethical boundaries to survive in a brutal world.

5. *"The Forever Purge" (2021): A New Dawn of Chaos*

In "The Forever Purge," the franchise takes a further step into uncharted territory, pushing the socio-legal themes to their limits. This time, the chaos doesn't confine itself to the annual 12-hour Purge night; it spills over into the days that follow as a group of lawless individuals continues the mayhem, disregarding the traditional rules. This installment introduces a new dimension to the series, exploring the breakdown of law and order beyond the established boundaries of the Purge.

- *Socio-Legal Anarchy:* "The Forever Purge" delves into the aftermath of unchecked

violence and the consequences of anarchy. The film portrays the breakdown of government authority and the struggle to regain control in a society teetering on the brink. The series, which began with the concept of a single night of lawlessness, now extends its exploration into the challenges of restoring order in a world where legality and morality have been profoundly shattered.

- *Crossroads of Morality:* The characters in this installment face an even more pronounced moral crossroads. As they navigate the perpetual Purge, their moral choices become increasingly intricate. This extreme scenario underscores the ever-evolving interplay between legality and ethics, forcing them to question their values, alliances, and survival strategies.
- *The Forever Purge as a Reflection:* "The Forever Purge" further extends the series' reflection of real-world issues, echoing themes of persistent violence, resistance, and the societal consequences of a disrupted social contract. It provides a haunting glimpse into a world where the rules are no longer followed, and where the socio-legal landscape has become a wasteland of moral ambiguities.
- *A Seamless Continuation:* The addition of "The Forever Purge" to the series serves as a seamless continuation of the socio-legal exploration that has been a hallmark of these films. It challenges our perceptions of government authority, morality, social inequality, and the role of resistance in the face of lawlessness

The "Purge" film series, with its exploration of socio-legal themes, can be linked to real-life examples and issues from around the world. These Include:-

1. *Authoritarian Regimes - North Korea:* North Korea serves as a real-world example of an authoritarian regime. In this country, the government wields tremendous power and control over its citizens. Civil liberties are severely restricted, dissent is brutally suppressed, and strict censorship is the norm. Much like the manipulation of consent through fear and propaganda in the "Purge" series, the North Korean government maintains its authority by instilling fear and limiting information, reflecting the dangers of unchecked government power.

2. *Protests and Resistance - Hong Kong Pro-Democracy Movement:* The pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, which gained momentum in 2019, provides a tangible example of citizens pushing back against government overreach and oppressive policies. Demonstrators in Hong Kong demanded democratic reforms and protection of their freedoms, mirroring the themes of resistance depicted in "The Purge: Anarchy" and "Purge: Election Year." Their protests underlined the importance of civic participation and the struggle for basic rights and self-determination in the face of authoritarian rule.
3. *Social Inequality - Income Inequality in the United States:* Income inequality is a global concern, and the United States is no exception. Here, a small segment of the population controls a significant portion of the wealth, while a larger percentage faces economic hardship. This wealth gap mirrors the social inequality portrayed in the "Purge" films. It highlights the challenges faced by those who lack access to the same opportunities and resources as the privileged few, showcasing the need for economic equity and social justice.
4. *Violence and Normalization - Gun Violence in the United States:* The normalization of gun violence in the United States is a critical real-world issue. Frequent incidents of mass shootings and the glorification of firearms in media have prompted discussions about the desensitization to violence, similar to how violence is portrayed as entertainment in the "Purge" series. These debates underline the urgent need for responsible gun control measures and the prevention of violence from becoming normalized.
5. *Economic Disparities - Labor Exploitation:* Examples of labour exploitation are found across the globe. Vulnerable workers in industries like agriculture or garment manufacturing can be forced to work in hazardous conditions for low pay due to economic pressures. This mirrors the economic coercion depicted in "The First Purge," where people are incentivized to participate in activities against their better judgment due to financial necessity.
6. *Political Movements - Black Lives Matter:* The Black Lives Matter movement is a prime example of a socio-legal movement that aims to address racial injustice and inequality. It reflects the themes of challenging systemic injustices and advocating for change, as seen in the "Purge" series. Protests for racial equality and justice illustrate the power of collective action

in confronting deeply ingrained social and legal disparities.

7. *Government Accountability - Accountability for Human Rights Abuses:* Instances where governments are held accountable for human rights abuses provide another real-world parallel to the "Purge" series. International organizations investigate and condemn governments responsible for human rights violations, emphasizing the importance of government accountability. These cases exemplify the necessity of upholding democratic principles and protecting the rights of citizens, as depicted in "Purge: Election Year."

CONCLUSION

In Conclusion, "The Purge" film series, spanning multiple instalments, takes us on a dark and thrilling journey into a dystopian world where the rules of society are temporarily suspended, allowing for a night of lawlessness and chaos. While these movies offer suspenseful storytelling and high-stakes action, they also serve as a lens through which we can examine several complex socio-legal themes, all of which resonate with real-world issues. One central theme explored in the series is the question of government authority and the consent of the governed. The films challenge the legitimacy of authority and the extent to which a government can go in the name of maintaining order. This resonates with real-world concerns about the abuse of power and the manipulation of public opinion through fear and propaganda, emphasizing the importance of informed and voluntary consent in a democratic society. The moral complexities faced by the characters are another compelling aspect. Their moral dilemmas illustrate the intricate interplay between legality and ethics, prompting us to consider our own values and principles when faced with extreme circumstances. These moral challenges depicted in the series-parallel real-world debates about self-defence, violence, and the pursuit of survival. Social inequality is a recurring theme throughout the films, showcasing the disparities between the privileged and the less fortunate. This mirrors real-world issues of income inequality and systemic injustices, pushing us to address and rectify these disparities. The portrayal of these disparities reminds us of the importance of striving for a more just and equitable society. Resistance against oppressive regimes is another central theme, echoing real-world movements like the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong or the fight for racial equality through the Black Lives Matter movement. The films emphasize the power of collective action in confronting systemic injustices and advocating for change. The "Purge" series

also draws attention to the normalization of violence, reflecting real-world concerns about the desensitization to violence, particularly in the context of gun violence. These discussions underscore the urgency of responsible gun control measures and preventing violence from becoming normalized. Lastly, the concept of government accountability, as seen in "Purge: Election Year," aligns with real-world instances where governments are held responsible for human rights abuses. It underscores the importance of upholding democratic principles and protecting citizens' rights, even in the face of oppressive regimes.

The "Purge" film series goes beyond being just thrilling entertainment; it actually challenges our thoughts about how governments wield power, what's right and wrong, social fairness, standing up to authority, violence, and holding those in charge responsible. It makes us think more deeply about these themes and encourages us to work towards a fairer and more just society in our real lives. These movies remind us how much harm unchecked government authority can cause and why it's crucial to preserve democratic values and safeguard the rights of all individuals.

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