

cole thompson photography newsletter

Issue 133 - March 1, 2025



Dunes of Nude No. 345

My Friend!

William Shakespeare said "to thine own self be true." But this presumes that you know yourself...but what if you don't?

I had a thought about this when watching the movie "The Conclave" the other day. See my thoughts in the article below.

Cole

P.S. "he who must not be named" keeps telling me that my newsletters are too long, and so I tried to make this one shorter. Fail!

In this issue:

- Quotes
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- Horizon's Photography Conference
- Do You Know Yourself?
- Rick Rubin: The Creative Act
- The Story Behind the Image:

- Print Drawing

Quotes

“Beware of direct inspiration. It leads too quickly to repetitions of what inspired you.”

Ernst Haas

"I never look at other people's work. My mind has to be completely focused on my own illusions."

Alexander McQueen

"It is better to be hated for what you are than to be loved for what you are not."

Andre Gide

"How shall we measure success? It isn't popularity, money, or critical esteem.

Success occurs in the privacy of the soul. It comes in the moment you decide to release the work, before exposure to a single opinion.

Success has nothing to do with variables outside yourself."

Rick Rubin

"....most important is to have a vision, to have an emotional feeling, to care about what you're photographing and to have something that's already there in your heart, in your eye...."

Heinz Kleutmeier

"You have to trust your instincts and follow your own inner direction in pursuit of personal ideas about what you want to paint.

You can't ignore technical skills, but they have to grow along the lines of your vision."

Arlene Anderson Skutch

“You see what you think, you see what you feel, you are what you see.

If with a camera you can make others see it - that is photography.”

Ernst Haas

A conversation overheard:

"I love shooting animals.

I've never really gotten into that, but I do like shooting children.
I'm going to the park to shoot some today.

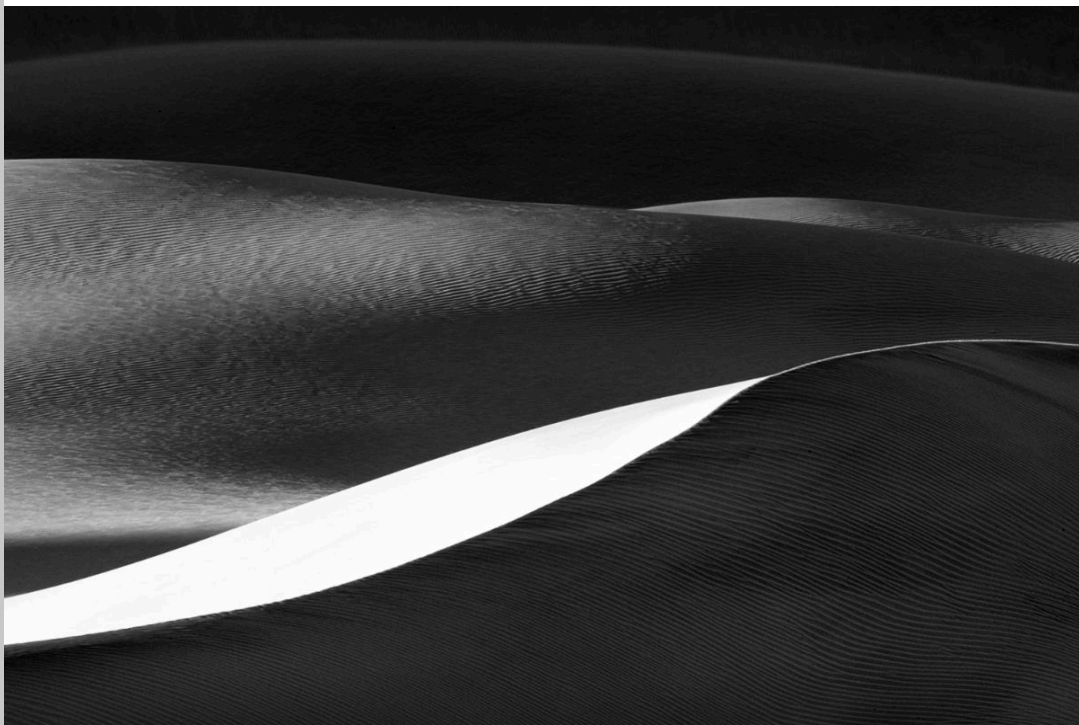
Don't the parents get upset?

I always ask first."

New Images



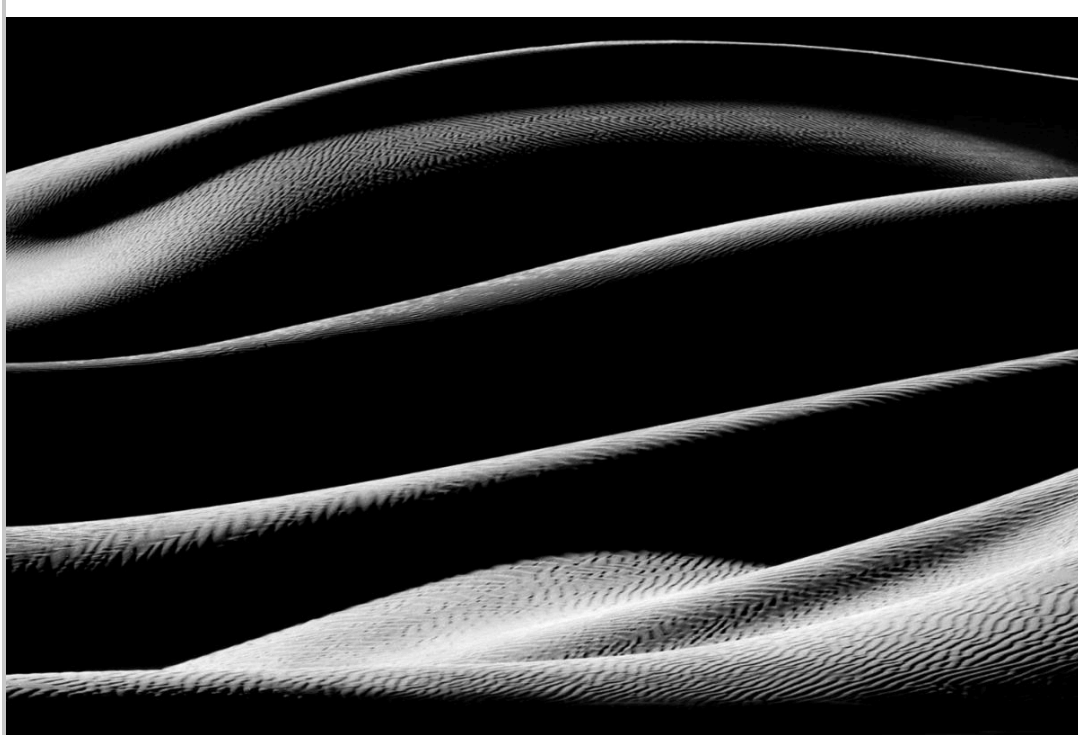
Harbinger No. 62



Touched by the Sun No. 3

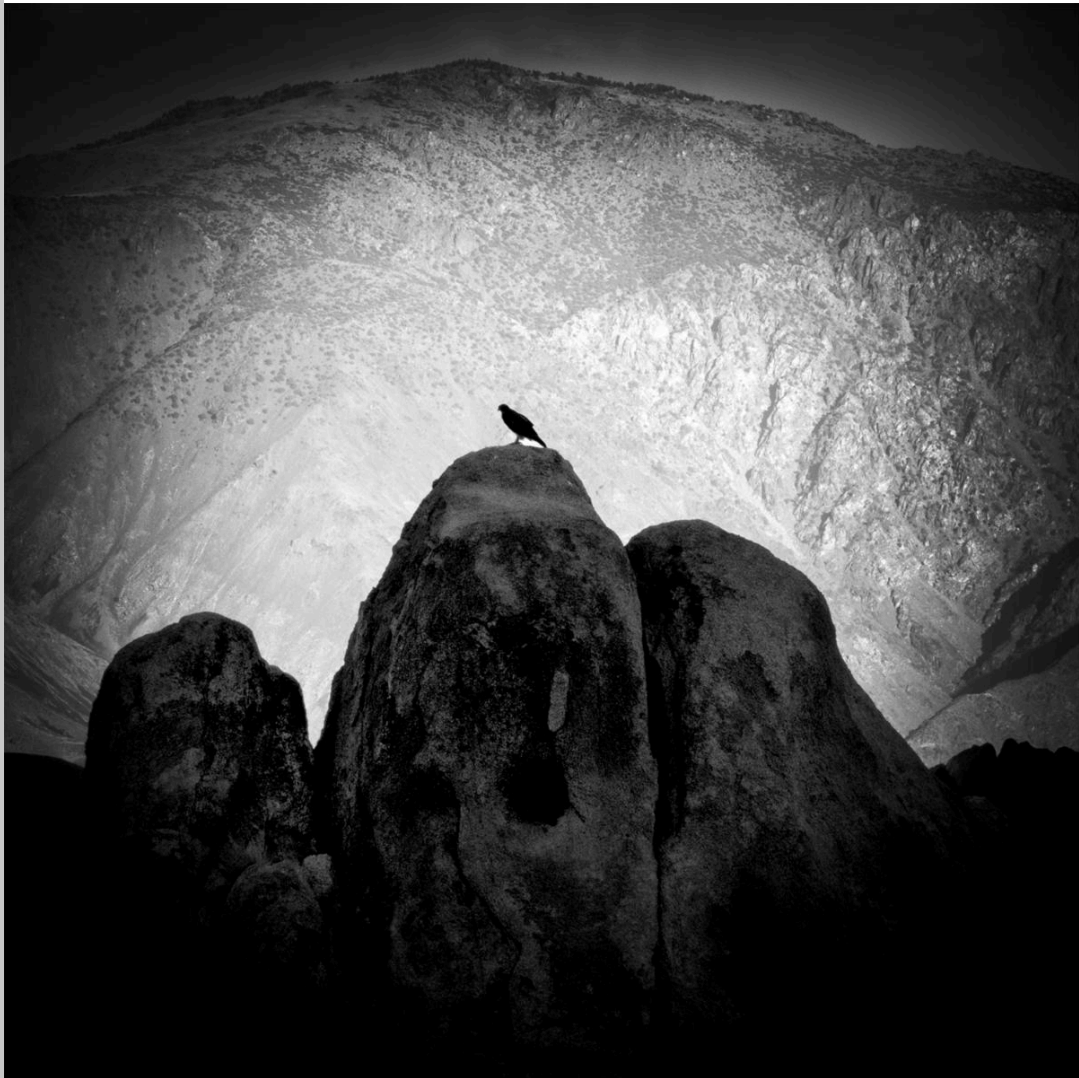


Touched by the Sun No. 1



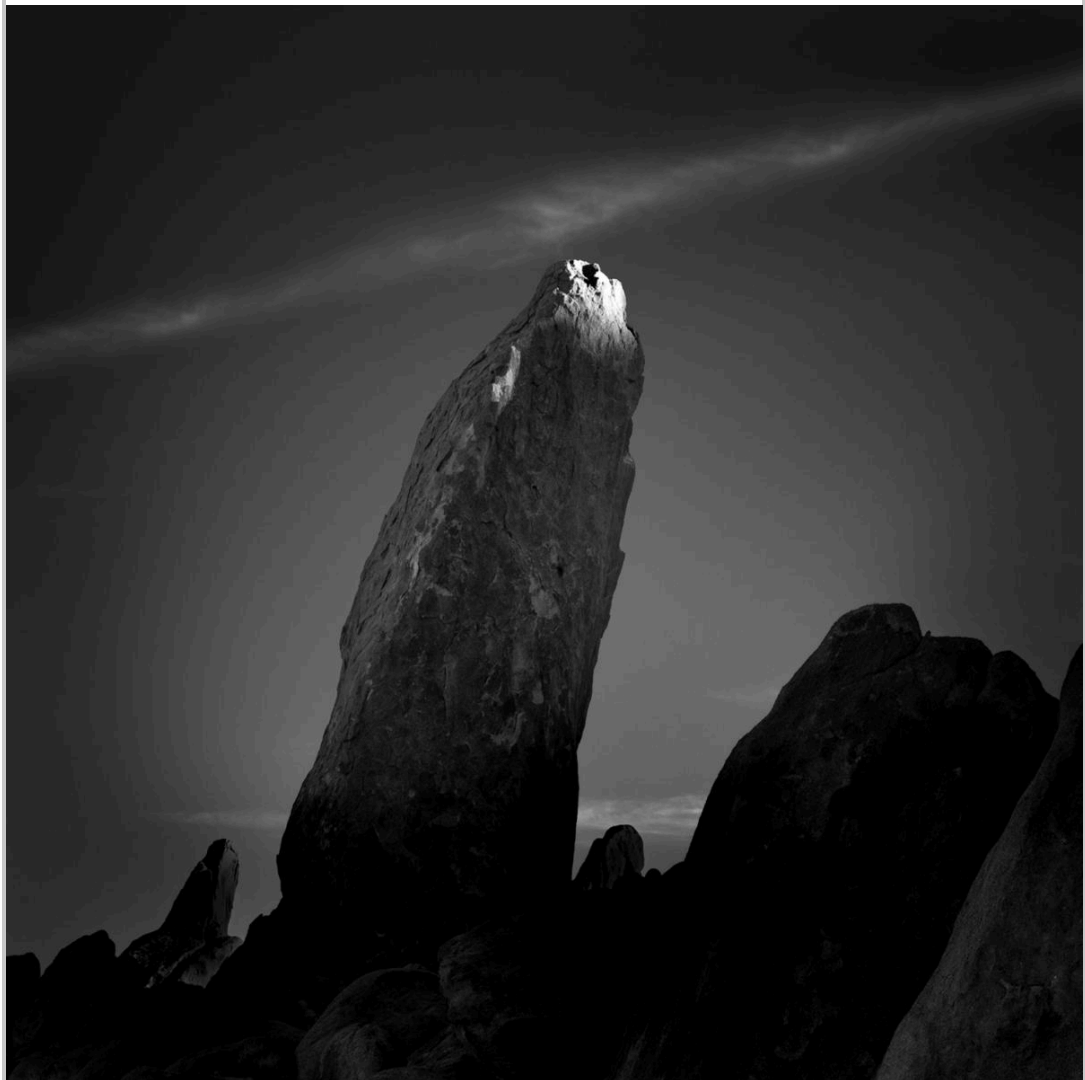
Dunes of Nude No. 348







Dunes of Nude No. 338



Horizon's Photography Conference



I've been invited to participate at the Horizons Photography Conference this upcoming October 2-5 in Durango, Colorado.

There will be many great photographers there and many good friends such as Beth Buelow, Brooks Jensen, Matt Payne, and Sarah Marino.

And no, "he" will not be there...



[Albert Dros](#)



[Andy Parkinson](#)



[Beth Buelow](#)



[Brooks Jensen](#)



[Cole Thompson](#)



[Derek Sturman](#)



[Dusty Doddridge](#)



[Huibo Hou](#)



[Ian Plant](#)



[Matt Payne](#)



[Michael Bollino](#)



[Michele Sons](#)



[Sarah Marino](#)



[Talar Stone](#)

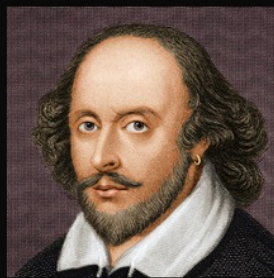


[Theo Bosboom](#)

Learn more about the conference and start planning to come to Colorado in October for the beautiful fall colors! (did I just say that???)

<https://www.horizonsphoto.com/>

Do You Know Yourself?



This above all; to thine own self
be true.

~ William Shakespeare

AZ QUOTES

Such great advice! But Bill, what if you don't know yourself...how can you be true to yourself?

A few days ago I was watching the movie "The Conclave" and this line struck me like lightning:

"It's shameful. To be this age and not know yourself."

I could relate to this feeling of not knowing yourself. A few years back when I was trying to find my Vision, the first thing I did was to print out my favorite images, sit on the floor and then divide them into two stacks. In the one stack I wanted to put the images that I REALLY loved, and everything else would go into the other stack.

The problem was: I didn't know which images I really loved.

I knew which images were the most popular. I knew which images got the most likes. I knew which images sold the best. I knew which images received the most compliments...but I didn't know which images were *my* favorites, I only knew which images were *other people's* favorites.

I did not know myself.

This realization caused me to question my motives and ask some hard questions: Why am I creating? What do I want from my photography?

After much soul searching, I came to realize that I had not been creating because I loved photography, but for the accolades. I had been creating for likes, to become famous, and to be looked up to as a great photographer. I did love photography, but over the years my motives had become "impure."

Admitting this was hard, but it took me a step closer to knowing myself, which took me a step closer to changing my motives, which took me a step closer to finding my Vision.

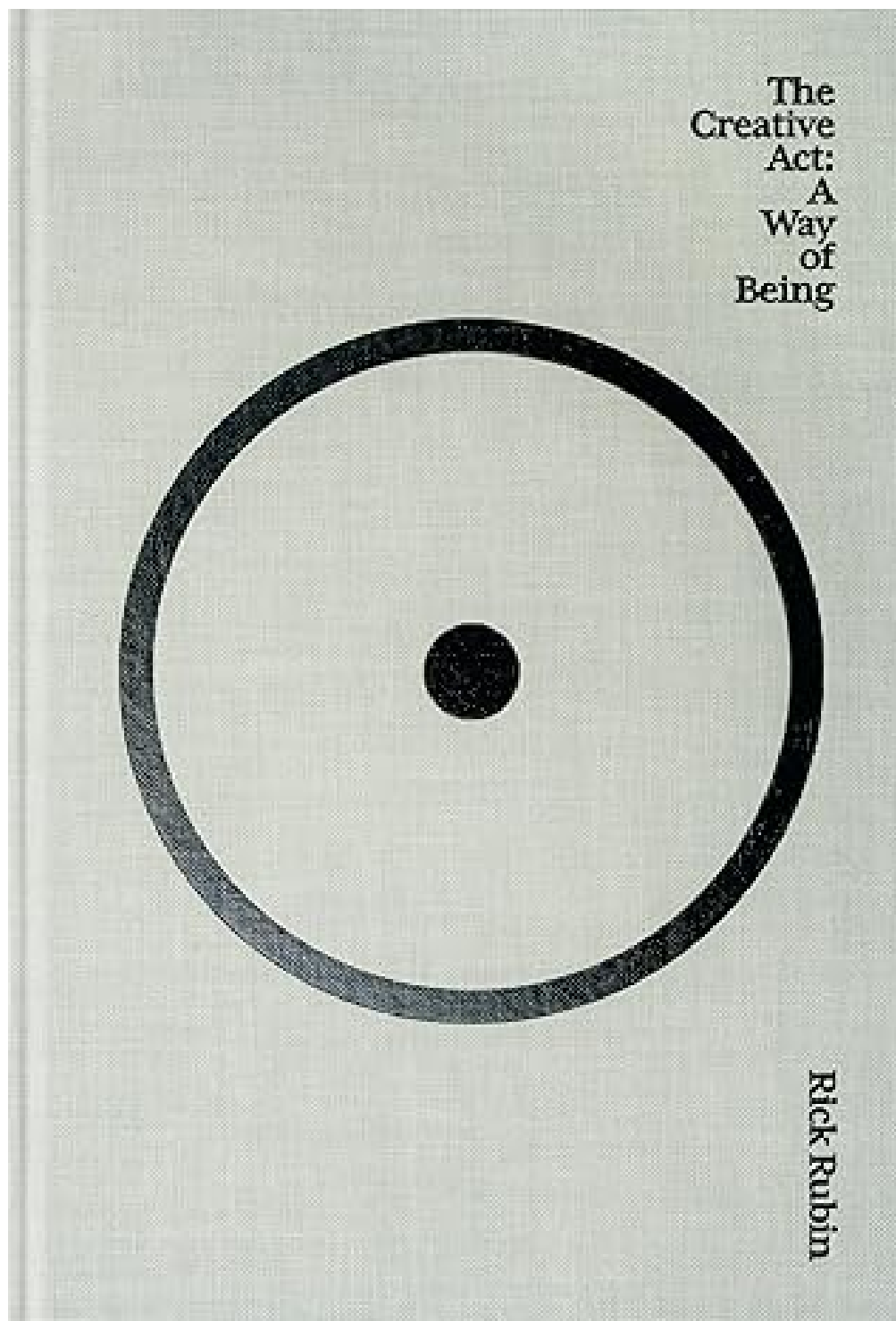
I was unable to be true to myself, because I did not know myself.

Wouldn't you think that after living with myself for so many years, I would know myself? But I didn't and that's why this line from the movie so resonated with me:

"It's shameful. To be this age and not know yourself."

We humans are very complex and it's not easy to know yourself, or to be completely honest with yourself. At any age.

Rick Rubin - The Creative Act



I am recommending this book a second time because I have found it so invaluable in understanding the purpose and power of creating art.

Many of you have written to say you have read "The Creative Act." Many have said that you have purchased it and plan to read it. But many of you have not responded.

Please listen to this short excerpt and consider purchasing this book in physical form, on Audible or Kindle.

[The Creative Act: A Way of Being by Rick Rubin](#)

This book is not just for people who consider themselves creative, but especially for those who do not consider themselves a creative.

Based on my personal experience and from talking to others, I have found that many photographers do not believe they are creative. And many gravitated to photography partly because they felt that it was a "technical art" and a lack of personal creativity could be compensated for by excelling in the technical.

Neither premise is true. Photography does require creativity and you are creative!

Listen to the audio clip, then order the book.

Trees From A Train



From the "Trees From A Train" Series

Just before Covid hit, I got a call from my friend Jim Norman. He said that he had a "two-for-one" ticket deal and was headed to Alaska, and would I like to come?

Boy howdy!

You see, I had lived in Alaska in the 1970's and had never returned. I had always wanted to, but life got in the way and it just never happened. And so I was excited!

We were flying into Fairbanks and Jim told me about this great 12 hour train ride from Fairbanks to Anchorage, through some of the most rugged and isolated parts of Alaska. Jim asked what I thought of the idea, and my response?

Boy howdy!

And on the day of the train ride, we were met with a wonderful snow storm!



So we get on the train, grab a window seat and start looking for something to photograph. Well, it didn't take long to realize that this was going to be more difficult than I had imagined. I was on a speeding train, going through a tunnel of trees, and in a big snowstorm. There wasn't a lot to see: no big landscapes and no Denali, just snow and trees.

So I went between two of the cars, opened up the doors, and began looking from this vantage point. Still, the only thing to be seen were the trees, and they were speeding by pretty fast. So with few other options, I started photographing the speeding trees. Not very exciting. Then I started panning my camera with the trees, and again not very exciting.

Then this thought came into my mind: I wonder what would happen if I used a long exposure and panned with the trees? Here was one of the first images:



Boy howdy!

I had no idea what was going on here, but I loved it! This motion, which I called "the swirl" was mesmerizing and for the next 12 hours I spent my time trying to understand and control the swirl.

It wasn't until I got home and did a bit of research that I understood what was causing it. It came about because of all the combined motions:



You have the train going one way, the trees are going another, I am panning with the trees...but the real key to the swirl was my shutter. My focal plane shutter in my SLR is a slit that moves from the top of the camera's frame to the bottom.

The combined horizontal movement and the vertical shutter caused the swirl.

But you know, even though I understand it intellectually, it still blows my mind when I see this image:



How do you have 360 degrees of swirl around a tree that is standing still?

Boy howdy!

Print Drawing



Dancing Windmills

For this month's print drawing I'll be giving away "Dancing Windmills."

To enter: send an email to Cole@ColeThompsonPhotography.com and put "Dancing Windmills" in the subject line.

Thanks for entering!

Email Cole and Enter the Drawing!

The winner of my last print drawing is Adam Burke who will be receiving a print of Harbinger No. 22."

Congratulations Adam, please contact me and arrange for your print to be delivered!

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