

rolling stones hells angels

Rolling Stones Hells Angels: Exploring the Intersection of Music, Motorcycle Culture, and Mythology

The phrase **Rolling Stones Hells Angels** conjures images of rebellion, rock and roll, and the rugged camaraderie of motorcycle clubs. These two iconic entities—The Rolling Stones, the legendary British rock band, and the Hells Angels, the infamous motorcycle club—have, over decades, become intertwined in the public consciousness through media portrayals, cultural references, and stories of counterculture resistance. While they represent different worlds—one musical, the other rooted in motorcycling—they share a common image of defiance and non-conformity that has fascinated fans and critics alike. This article delves into the history, myths, and cultural significance of the relationship between the Rolling Stones and the Hells Angels, shedding light on how their stories have become intertwined in popular culture.

The Origins of the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club

Founding and Evolution

The Hells Angels Motorcycle Club was established in 1948 in California, emerging from post-World War II motorcycle enthusiasts who sought camaraderie and adventure on two wheels. Originally formed as a small group of motorcycle riders, the club quickly grew in size and notoriety, embodying the rebellious spirit of freedom, independence, and defiance of authority.

Throughout the decades, the Hells Angels transformed from a local motorcycle club into a global outlaw motorcycle organization, with chapters across the United States, Europe, and beyond. Their reputation was cemented through stories of criminal activities, clashes with law enforcement, and their distinctive insignia—an winged death's head logo.

Mythology and Cultural Perception

The Hells Angels became a symbol of countercultural resistance, embodying a rugged, outlaw image that appealed to many young people seeking identity outside mainstream society. Media portrayals often sensationalized their activities, portraying them as violent and dangerous, though members often emphasize brotherhood, loyalty, and a code of conduct.

The Rolling Stones: A Brief History

Formation and Rise to Fame

Formed in London in 1962, The Rolling Stones quickly rose to international fame with their raw sound, blues influences, and rebellious attitude. Fronted by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, the band became emblematic of the rock and roll ethos—anti-establishment, energetic, and provocative.

Over the years, The Rolling Stones have released numerous classic albums, including *Sticky Fingers*, *Exile on Main Street*, and *Let It Bleed*, earning a reputation as one of the greatest and most enduring rock bands in history. Their performances often attracted large crowds and media attention, not only for their music but also for their controversial antics.

Cultural Impact

The band's influence extended beyond music into fashion, attitude, and culture. They became symbols of youthful rebellion and non-conformity, often associated with the counterculture movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Their image as rock and roll outlaws has persisted, making them an ideal fit for stories involving motorcycle culture and rebellious youth.

The Connection Between The Rolling Stones and the Hells Angels

The 1969 Altamont Free Concert

Perhaps the most infamous link between The Rolling Stones and the Hells Angels is their involvement in the 1969 Altamont Free Concert in California. The event was staged as a West Coast Woodstock, intended to be a celebration of peace and music. However, it turned into a tragic day when a Hells Angels member stabbed and killed Meredith Hunter during the Rolling Stones' performance.

The Hells Angels had been hired as security for the concert, partly to control the large crowds. Their presence, initially seen as a way to maintain order, instead became a symbol of violence and chaos. The incident at Altamont marked a turning point in the counterculture movement, symbolizing the darker side of the era's idealism.

Mutual Symbolism and Public Perception

Over the years, the Rolling Stones have been associated with motorcycle culture, partly because of their rebellious image and partly due to their collaborations and friendships with Hells Angels members. The band's 1970 album *Let It Bleed* features cover art that evokes themes of chaos and rebellion, resonating with the outlaw motorcycle aesthetic.

Members of the band have also expressed admiration for the Hells Angels' brotherhood and sense of loyalty, though they have distanced themselves from any criminal activity. The association has been reinforced through media stories, documentaries, and popular lore.

The Mythology and Media Portrayals

Popular Media and Films

Films like Hell's Angels on Wheels (1967) and documentaries such as Hells Angels Forever (1983) have cemented the image of the motorcycle club as dangerous outlaws. The media often portrays them as violent, criminal, and anti-establishment, which has contributed to their mythos.

Similarly, the story of The Rolling Stones' involvement at Altamont has been the subject of numerous documentaries and books, emphasizing themes of innocence lost and the chaos of the 1960s.

Myth vs. Reality

While media portrayals often sensationalize the criminal aspects of the Hells Angels, many members insist that their organization is based on brotherhood, loyalty, and a love of riding motorcycles. The truth is complex, with a mixture of legitimate social bonds and illegal activities.

The association with The Rolling Stones has, at times, reinforced this mythic image of rebellion, making both entities icons of counterculture in the public imagination.

The Cultural Legacy and Modern Perspectives

Influence on Music and Popular Culture

The relationship between The Rolling Stones and the Hells Angels has influenced music, fashion, and storytelling. The rebellious image of both has been adopted and adapted by countless artists, emphasizing themes of freedom and non-conformity.

The band's enduring legacy is intertwined with stories of motorcycle culture, symbolizing a resistance to societal norms and authority.

Contemporary Views and Legacy

Today, the Hells Angels continue to be a prominent, if controversial, motorcycle organization, while The Rolling Stones remain one of the most successful bands in history. Their stories continue to inspire books, films, and music that explore themes of rebellion, brotherhood, and the enduring allure of the outlaw image.

Despite controversies, both have contributed significantly to their respective cultures, shaping perceptions of rebellion and non-conformity that

persist to this day.

Conclusion

The phrase **Rolling Stones Hells Angels** encapsulates a complex web of history, myth, and cultural symbolism. While their direct interactions have been limited and often controversial—most notably at Altamont—their shared image as icons of rebellion has cemented their place in the collective imagination. Both the band and the motorcycle club symbolize a desire to break free from societal constraints, forging identities rooted in loyalty, defiance, and the pursuit of freedom. Their stories continue to resonate, inspiring new generations to question authority and embrace the spirit of rebellion that defines them.

Keywords: Rolling Stones, Hells Angels, motorcycle club, rebellion, Altamont, counterculture, rock and roll, outlaw motorcycle organization, 1960s, rebellion symbolism

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the connection between the Rolling Stones and the Hells Angels?

The Rolling Stones famously collaborated with the Hells Angels during their 1969 US tour, leading to the legendary Altamont Free Concert, which became notorious for violence involving the motorcycle club and the band.

Why did the Rolling Stones choose to work with the Hells Angels for their 1969 tour?

The band sought motorcycle club security for their tour, and the Hells Angels provided a formidable presence, believing it would enhance the event's rebellious image, though it ultimately led to tragic consequences at Altamont.

What was the impact of the Altamont Free Concert on the Rolling Stones' reputation?

The Altamont concert, marked by violence and a death during the event, cast a shadow over the Rolling Stones' reputation, highlighting the dangers of the counterculture and the volatile relationship between rock bands and outlaw motorcycle clubs.

Are the Hells Angels still associated with the Rolling Stones today?

While the Hells Angels are historically linked to the Rolling Stones' 1969 tour, there is no ongoing official association, and the band has distanced

itself from any direct connections to the motorcycle club.

Have the Rolling Stones spoken publicly about their involvement with the Hells Angels?

Yes, members of the Rolling Stones have reflected on their 1969 tour and the Altamont incident, often expressing regret over the violence and emphasizing that they did not intend for such tragedy to occur.

What role did the Hells Angels play at the Altamont concert?

The Hells Angels were hired as security for the event and were involved in violence that resulted in the stabbing death of Meredith Hunter, making their role controversial and widely criticized.

How did the association between the Rolling Stones and the Hells Angels influence rock history?

Their partnership at Altamont became a symbol of the end of the 1960s counterculture era, illustrating the darker side of the rock movement and highlighting issues of violence, security, and the clash of subcultures.

Are there any cultural depictions of the Rolling Stones and Hells Angels in movies or documentaries?

Yes, the Altamont concert and the Rolling Stones' association with the Hells Angels have been depicted in films like 'Gimme Shelter' (1970), which explores the tragic event and its cultural significance.

Additional Resources

Rolling Stones Hells Angels: An In-Depth Exploration of Music, Myth, and Motorcycle Culture

The phrase Rolling Stones Hells Angels immediately conjures images of rebellious energy, iconic music, and the intertwining worlds of rock and motorcycle culture. While these two entities—The Rolling Stones and the Hells Angels—are distinct in their origins and identities, their histories have intersected in fascinating and sometimes controversial ways. This article aims to provide a comprehensive guide to understanding the relationship and cultural significance of the Rolling Stones Hells Angels connection, delving into their histories, overlaps, conflicts, and the broader societal implications.

The Origins of The Rolling Stones and the Hells Angels

The Rolling Stones: A Brief History

- Formation and Rise:
- Founded in London in 1962, The Rolling Stones emerged during the British Invasion, quickly establishing themselves as one of the most influential rock bands of all time.
- Core members included Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts, and Brian Jones.
- Musical Style and Cultural Impact:
- Known for blues-inspired rock, rebellious lyrics, and energetic performances.
- Their influence extended beyond music, shaping youth culture and attitudes toward rebellion and freedom.

The Hells Angels: Origins and Evolution

- Founding and Growth:
- Established in 1948 in Fontana, California, the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club grew into one of the most notorious outlaw motorcycle gangs.
- Known for their commitment to motorcycle riding, camaraderie, and a rebellious ethos.
- Reputation and Controversies:
- The Hells Angels have been linked to various illegal activities, though members often emphasize their brotherhood and love of motorcycles.
- Their distinctive logo and culture have made them a symbol of outlaw motorcycle identity.

The Intersection of Music and Motorcycle Culture

Musical Influences and Overlaps

- The 1960s and 70s saw a rising fascination with outlaw biker culture within rock music.
- The Rolling Stones, often perceived as rebellious icons, embodied the spirit associated with outlaw motorcycle groups, leading to collaborations, associations, and mutual admiration.
- Notably, some band members, especially Keith Richards, were known to have friendships or associations with Hells Angels members.

Iconography and Symbolism

- The Hells Angels' distinctive winged death's head logo and patches became symbols of rebellion, which resonated with rock bands' imagery.
- The Rolling Stones' logo, the iconic "tongue and lips," became similarly emblematic of defiance and counterculture.

The Controversies and Conflicts

The 1969 Altamont Free Concert

- One of the most infamous moments linking The Rolling Stones and Hells Angels occurred during the 1969 Altamont Free Concert in California.
- The Hells Angels served as security, a decision that resulted in violence:
- A concertgoer, Meredith Hunter, was fatally stabbed by Hells Angels members during the Rolling Stones' set.
- This event marked a tragic turning point, symbolizing the dark side of the counterculture movement.

The Hells Angels as Cultural Symbols

- The association with the Hells Angels led to both admiration and suspicion for rock bands.
- The media often sensationalized the connection, portraying rock musicians as either sympathizers or unwitting collaborators with outlaw biker groups.

Legal and Social Ramifications

- The link between the Hells Angels and the music scene prompted law enforcement crackdowns.
- Some bands and artists faced scrutiny due to their associations, though the extent of direct involvement varied.

Modern Perspectives and Legacy

The Continuing Cultural Influence

- Today, both The Rolling Stones and the Hells Angels remain cultural icons.
- The Stones continue to be celebrated for their music, while the Hells Angels have maintained their outlaw reputation.
- Their enduring symbols—music, tattoos, logos—continue to inspire art, fashion, and media.

Reevaluating the Relationship

- In recent years, the narrative has shifted from sensationalism to a more nuanced understanding:

- The Hells Angels are viewed as complex social groups with diverse members.
- The Rolling Stones' association with biker culture is often acknowledged as part of their rebellious persona rather than an endorsement of criminal activity.

The Role of Media and Popular Culture

- Movies like "Gimme Shelter" (1970) depict the chaos at Altamont, cementing the event's place in rock history.
- Documentaries and books explore the intertwined histories, emphasizing the cultural symbolism over criminal allegations.

Key Takeaways and Cultural Significance

- The relationship between Rolling Stones Hells Angels is emblematic of the broader countercultural movements of the 1960s and 70s.
- Both entities symbolize rebellion, non-conformity, and a desire for freedom, though their methods and identities differ.
- Their interactions—ranging from friendship to conflict—highlight the complex dynamics of music, identity, and societal perception.

Summary of Major Points

- The Rolling Stones and the Hells Angels emerged from different but intersecting cultural spheres—rock music and motorcycle outlaw culture.
- Their collaboration, especially during the late 1960s, led to iconic moments like the Altamont concert, which had lasting repercussions.
- Media portrayal has often sensationalized their connection, but modern perspectives seek a balanced understanding.
- Their legacy influences contemporary music, fashion, and attitudes toward rebellion and freedom.

Conclusion

The Rolling Stones Hells Angels connection is a compelling chapter in the story of 20th-century counterculture. It encapsulates themes of rebellion, identity, and societal boundaries. While their relationship has been marked by controversy, it also reflects the broader cultural currents that challenged norms and celebrated individualism. Whether viewed through the lens of music history, motorcycle culture, or societal change, the intertwined narratives of these icons continue to fascinate and inspire new generations. Understanding this complex relationship allows us to appreciate the enduring symbols of defiance and the ongoing dialogue between art, identity, and societal perception.

[Rolling Stones Hells Angels](#)

rolling stones hells angels: *Altamont* Joel Selvin, 2016-08-16 In this breathtaking cultural history filled with exclusive, never-before-revealed details, celebrated rock journalist Joel Selvin tells the definitive story of the Rolling Stones' infamous Altamont concert, the disastrous historic event that marked the end of the idealistic 1960s. In the annals of rock history, the Altamont Speedway Free Festival on December 6, 1969, has long been seen as the distorted twin of Woodstock—the day that shattered the Sixties' promise of peace and love when a concertgoer was killed by a member of the Hells Angels, the notorious biker club acting as security. While most people know of the events from the film *Gimme Shelter*, the whole story has remained buried in varied accounts, rumor, and myth—until now. *Altamont* explores rock's darkest day, a fiasco that began well before the climactic death of Meredith Hunter and continued beyond that infamous December night. Joel Selvin probes every aspect of the show—from the Stones' hastily planned tour preceding the concert to the bad acid that swept through the audience to other deaths that also occurred that evening—to capture the full scope of the tragedy and its aftermath. He also provides an in-depth look at the Grateful Dead's role in the events leading to Altamont, examining the band's behind-the-scenes presence in both arranging the show and hiring the Hells Angels as security. The product of twenty years of exhaustive research and dozens of interviews with many key players, including medical staff, Hells Angels members, the stage crew, and the musicians who were there, and featuring sixteen pages of color photos, *Altamont* is the ultimate account of the final event in rock's formative and most turbulent decade.

rolling stones hells angels: *The Rolling Stones* Audrey Borus, Heather Miller, 2018-12-15 On July 12, 1962, the Marquis Club in London debuted a new band. Scruffy-looking and irreverent, they performed music that hadn't really been heard on English shores, a combination of the blues, a style of music written and performed by slaves in the American South, and a newer genre, rock and roll. They called themselves The Rolling Stones. Through informative sidebars, fascinating direct quotations, and revealing personal facts, this book explores the past, present, and future of the legendary band that more than fifty years later, still keeps turning out hits.

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rolling stones hells angels: *Just a Shot Away* Saul Austerlitz, 2018-07-10 "The most blisteringly impassioned music book of the season." —New York Times Book Review A thrilling account of the Altamont Festival—and the dark side of the '60s. If Woodstock tied the ideals of the '60s together, Altamont unraveled them. In *Just a Shot Away*, writer and critic Saul Austerlitz tells the story of "Woodstock West," where the Rolling Stones hoped to end their 1969 American tour triumphantly with the help of the Grateful Dead, the Jefferson Airplane, and 300,000 fans. Instead the concert featured a harrowing series of disasters, starting with the concert's haphazard planning. The bad acid kicked in early. The Hells Angels, hired to handle security, began to prey on the concertgoers. And not long after the Rolling Stones went on, an 18-year-old African-American named Meredith Hunter was stabbed by the Angels in front of the stage. The show, and the Woodstock high, were over. Austerlitz shows how Hunter's death came to symbolize the end of an era while the trial of his accused murderer epitomized the racial tensions that still underlie America. He also finds a silver lining in the concert in how Rolling Stone's coverage of it helped create a new form of music journalism, while the making of the movie about Altamont, *Gimme Shelter*, birthed new forms of documentary. Using scores of new interviews with Paul Kantner, Jann Wenner, journalist John Burks, filmmaker Joan Churchill, and many members of the Rolling Stones' inner circle, as well as Meredith Hunter's family, Austerlitz shows that you can't understand the '60s or rock and roll if you don't come to grips with Altamont.

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been such a thorough account of the Angels. This book documents the gang's bumpy ride from its origins as a Stateside club for WWII fighter pilots to its freewheeling terror tactics of the early sixties, to its absurd flirtation with the hippie scene, to its current status as one of the most powerful underground organisations in North America, rivalling even the Mafia.

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and historically significant crimes that have influenced America's justice system, including the life and wrongdoing of Lizzie Borden, the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, the killing spree and execution of Ted Bundy, and the Columbine High School shootings. Organized by case, the work includes a chronology of major unlawful deeds, fascinating primary source documents, dozens of sidebars with case trivia and little-known facts, and an overview of crimes that have shaped criminal justice in the United States over several centuries. Each of the 500 entries provides information about the crime, the perpetrators, and those affected by the misconduct, along with a short bibliography to extend learning opportunities. The set addresses a breadth of famous trials across American history, including the Salem witch trials, the conviction of Sacco and Vanzetti, and the prosecution of O. J. Simpson.

rolling stones hells angels: J. D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye Josef Benson, 2018-03-12 A fascinating examination of J.D. Salinger and his landmark novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*. Since its publication in 1951, *The Catcher in the Rye* has been a cultural phenomenon, not only as an assigned text for English courses, but as a touchstone for generations of alienated youth. But who was J.D. Salinger, and how did he come to write a novel whose impact continues to resonate with millions of readers? In *J.D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye: A Cultural History*, Josef Benson examines the legacy of an elusive author and his work. After exploring how the novel reflected Salinger's tortured psyche, Benson discusses how the book made an impact on generations of readers—from 1960s counter-culture youth and followers of the Black Power movement of the 1970s to the disenfranchised teens of the Reagan era and the celebrity-fixated masses of the present day. In addition, Benson unravels the mystery behind Salinger's reclusiveness, the effects the novel had on the reading public who adored it, and why three American assassins cited the novel as an inspiration. *J.D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye* also considers why this work of fiction has been among the most widely taught—and most frequently banned—books of all time. By looking at the novel as both an artifact of the 1950s as well as a living testament to the turmoil of teenage angst, this book provides a riveting discussion of one of the most enigmatic novels and authors of all time.

rolling stones hells angels: The Grateful Dead by Jim Marshall Jim Marshall, Amelia Davis, David Gans, 2025-08-05 One of the greatest bands of all time and one of the greatest music photographers in history meet in this incredible visual archive featuring exclusive never-before-seen photos. Jim Marshall took over ten thousand photos of the Grateful Dead throughout their career—from Woodstock to the last free concert on Haight Street and beyond. Marshall's magnificent images chronicle the band's trajectory as hairstyles changed, relationships came and went, and the music evolved into the sound that would become beloved by generations to come. Marshall's instinctive eye matched the Dead's improvisational style, and he was welcomed into its family as he immersed himself in San Francisco's counterculture scene throughout the 1960s and '70s. He documented casual domestic scenes and transcendent concerts alike, offering a nuanced and intimate portrait of the band. The striking images in this book—a third of which have never been published—are printed in the rich, high-contrast tones that Marshall favored. They include glimpses of remarkable moments like the Newport Pop Festival, Woodstock, and the Human Be-In. Quotes from contemporaries, collaborators, and members of the wider Dead community bring the images alive, while longer essays contextualize this photographic archive. Whether you were there from the beginning or wish you had been, this is your chance to see a glorious era of music history as you've never seen it before, through the eyes of a visionary artist. PHOTOGRAPHY ICON: Jim Marshall is the great rock-and-roll photographer, as his images of the Grateful Dead prove. In addition to being a legendary artist, he was a peer, colleague, and friend to the musicians and documented countless iconic musical moments throughout the 1960s and 1970s. NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN IMAGES: From electrifying photos of the band playing live onstage to more intimate portraits of rehearsals, this collection showcases an amazing array of images. One-third of the photos have never before been published, making *The Grateful Dead* by Jim Marshall an exclusive treat for any Deadhead or photography fan. THE ULTIMATE DEADHEAD COLLECTIBLE: Many books and documentary films have been created about the Grateful Dead, but Marshall's photographs offer an unmatched time

capsule of the Dead and their era. Published to coincide with the band's 60th anniversary, this book is a perfect gift for anyone who's interested in music history or nostalgic for the counterculture of the '60s and '70s. Perfect for: Fans and followers of the Grateful Dead, Jerry Garcia, and Dead & Company Jim Marshall fans Classic rock devotees and musicians Photographers and photography book collectors Holiday shoppers looking for a great present for music lovers Birthday or any special occasion gift-giving to any devoted fan of the Dead and iconic American rock bands

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primary documents with their own introductions and a sample document-based essay question. Other features include a list of Top Tips, a thematically tagged chronology, and a list of specific learning objectives readers can use to gauge their working knowledge and understanding of the period.

rolling stones hells angels: The Mammoth Book of Bikers Arthur Veno, 2011-09-01 The definitive collection of first-hand accounts of the world's outlaw motorcycle gangs, with contributions by Sonny Barger, Hunter S. Thompson, Ed Winterhalder, William Queen and many more Outlaw bikers consider themselves 'the last free people in society', unconstrained by the regulations that hem in ordinary citizens. And they guard their privacy jealously. Drawing on seventeen years of studying and participating in biker culture, the author has compiled this one-of-a-kind collection of original biker writing. Here are insider accounts of landmark incidents in biker folklore, including reprints of classic writing from biker-originated magazines, handouts, websites and books. Gangs featured include the Bandidos, the Hells Angels, Henchmen MC, the Outlaws, the Mongols, the Annihilators, the Diablos, the Gypsy Jokers, the Rebels, the Straight Satans and the Vagos. And with contributors such as Freewheelin' Frank (one-time secretary of the Hells Angels), Edward Winterhalder (among the most powerful members of the Bandidos) and Sonny Barger (founder of the Hells Angels). Also included are those rare accounts by outsiders who have succeeded in 'looking in' on the gangs: Hunter S. Thompson's Hells Angels: A Strange and Terrible Modern Saga; writing by William Queen, the undercover agent who infiltrated America's violent outlaw motorcycle gang the Mongols; and Daniel R. Wolf's account of riding with the Rebels.

rolling stones hells angels: *Mad, Bad & Dangerous To Know* Paul Taylor, 2023-03-01 This anthology of true crime stories written by Paul Taylor will satisfy the appetite of all true crime enthusiasts. The thirty-one chapters comprise notorious and fascinating cases, and shed light on chilling criminal personalities many of whom are known around the world. Readers will recognise local names such as Martin Bryant, Ivan Milat and Mark 'Chopper' Read, and immerse themselves in international events that involved Oscar Pistorius, the infamous duo Bonnie and Clyde and last but not least O.J. Simpson. By the time readers reach the end of this book, they will have no doubt uncovered which criminals were mad, bad or dangerous to know.

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decades. From its title to the dark themes that pervade some of its songs, *Beggars Banquet* reflected and helped define a moment marked by violence, decay, and upheaval. It marked a move away from the artistic sonic flourishes of psychedelic rock towards an embrace of foundational streams of American music – blues, country – that had always underpinned the music of the Stones but assumed new primacy in their music after 1968. This move coincided with, and anticipated, the ‘roots’ moves that many leading popular music artists made as the 1960s turned toward a new decade; but unlike many of their peers whose music grew more ‘soft’ and subdued as they embraced traditional styles, the music and attitude of the Stones only grew harder and more menacing, and their status as representatives of the dark underside of the 60s rock counterculture assumed new solidity. For the Rolling Stones, the 1960s ended and the 1970s began with the release of this album in 1968.

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