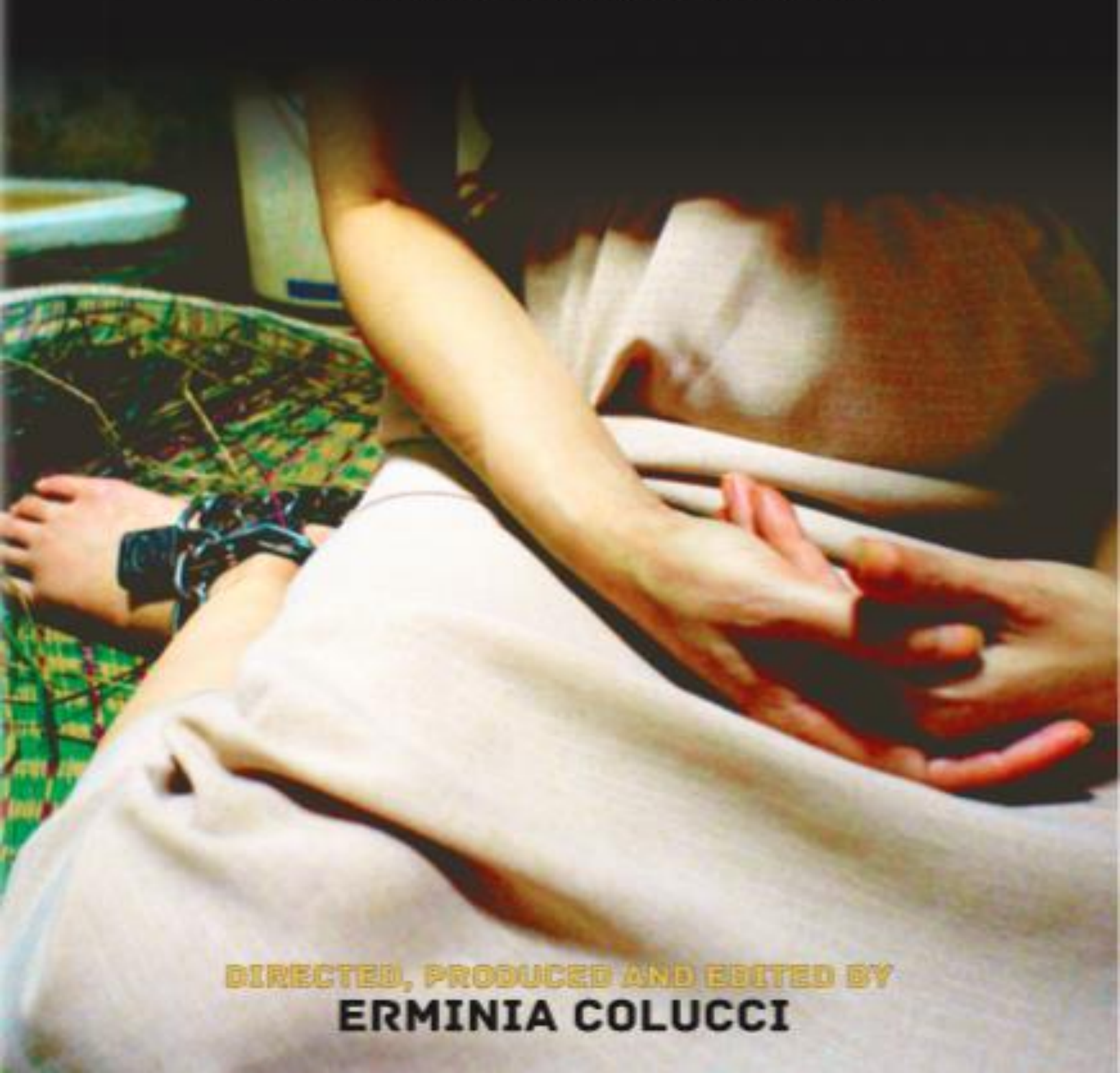


Breaking the Chains

HUMAN RIGHTS IN MENTAL HEALTH



DIRECTED, PRODUCED AND EDITED BY
ERMINIA COLUCCI

Introduction

Breaking the Chains highlights the unflinching efforts of a local Indonesian organisation fighting a battle for human rights. In Indonesia, as in other countries worldwide, individuals coping with mental health issues are often chained, caged, locked away and held in isolation. In Bahasa, Indonesia, both the chains and the practice of binding those with mental illness are called *pasung*. Members of Komunitas Sehat Jiwah (KSJ) are determined to combat the use of *pasung* and seek to bring health support and freedom to mental health patients in the remote areas of Cianjur, West Java. KSJ works together with local doctors, health care services, families, communities and former *pasung* victims to guide communities towards effective and humane treatment. The KSJ volunteers often traverse dangerous roads and walk for hours into the jungle to access isolated families; they are committed to building new approaches to mental health and to eradicating *pasung* one patient at a time.

Breaking the Chains captures both the unfailing commitment of KSJ and the untold stories of *pasung* victims like Yahah, a young woman who has been chained inside a small room for 17 years. Simultaneously heart wrenching and inspiring, the film is the first documentary to focus on this almost universally ignored violation of human rights.

The filmmaker received exclusive access to stories that have not previously been represented by the international media. These stories have significance beyond Indonesia, as other low-income countries such as Somalia, Afghanistan and Cambodia chain and cage mental health patients. In featuring the activism efforts in Indonesia to stop *pasung*, this documentary aims to encourage action in other countries where similar practices continue to be prevalent.

For more information, visit:

<http://movie-ment.org/breakingthechains/>

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At a Glance:

In rural Indonesia, local human rights and mental health activists fight to eliminate traditional practices of chaining and caging the mentally ill.

Short Synopsis:

Breaking the Chains depicts the use of physical restraint and confinement of people with mental illness, an illegal practice known as *pasung* in Indonesia but prevalent in low and middle-income countries worldwide. While almost universally ignored, the Indonesian government has committed to working towards eradicating these severe human rights violations. This documentary, the first of its kind, follows the efforts carried out by activists who themselves have coped with mental health problems. These activists fight for the care, freedom and dignity of the mentally ill who have been restrained, such as Yayah, a young woman chained inside a small room for 17 years, or Narhim, a man who has been left naked and malnourished in a cage with no entry nor exit.

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Long Synopsis:

The practice of using shackles and chains (known as *pasung*) to physically restrain people with mental illness is widespread in Indonesia, as in many other low-income countries, and almost universally ignored. Thousands of people are estimated to live in isolation, restrained by chains and cages. Often undernourished and at times kept naked in deplorable living conditions, the mental and physical consequences of these practices are profound.

This film raises a voice for the mentally ill people in Indonesia who are living in restraints, and tells an original story about the social and political activism to free them.

In particular, **Breaking the Chains** follows the “bottom-up” activities that have been initiated by an organization in Cianjur. Led and run by volunteers who also have coped with mental health problems, the organisation seeks to bring freedom and care to patients in *pasung*.

Viewers follow the determined leaders of this movement into remote Indonesia to witness the stories of Yayah, a woman who had been chained for 17 years, and Asep, a young boy who was chained after he went missing for years.



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Director/Producer Biography

Erminia Colucci is an ethnographic documentary filmmaker and an established researcher focusing on issues of social justice, human/women rights, mental health and suicide. Her films and photographs have been shown in Italy, Australia, USA, France, Uruguay, Greece, Germany, Poland, Canada, UK and Switzerland.

Erminia is the founder and festival director of Aperture, the first Asia Pacific International Ethnographic Documentary Festival. She chairs the non-profit 'Multicultural Women in Arts' and co-chairs the World Association of Cultural Psychiatry SIG on 'Arts, Media and Mental Health.' She recently completed a collaborative film-documentary about suicide and is currently completing an ethnographic documentary project about domestic/family violence in the Philippines.

Erminia was the director, videographer, sound and editor of her first feature-length documentary 'Breaking the Chains,' working in collaboration with the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology (The University of Manchester, UK), and the Centre for Mental Health (University of Melbourne, Australia). She is currently based in London (Queen Mary University of London).

Filmography

Director, co-editor of short-documentary "Haridwar: A spiritual Journey," 2009 (India/Australia)

Assistant Director of short-documentary "Arts and Suicide: A short documentary on a suicide survivor's artwork," 2009 (Australia)

Photographer for the awards-winning The72Project's "The Ballad of Des & Mo" 2010 (UK)

Co-director, assistant editor, still photographer, assistant camera, sound Film/Photo-documentary series "Open for (more than) Business" for the Immigration Museum, 2011 (Australia)

Co-director and editor, "The Bloody Kids" short documentary, 2012 (UK)

Director, camera, sound and editor, "Songs of Memory, Songs of Loss," 2012 (Italy/UK)

Coordinator of participatory video project "Finding our Way," journeys of recovery of people from migrants and refugee backgrounds.

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Faces of the Film

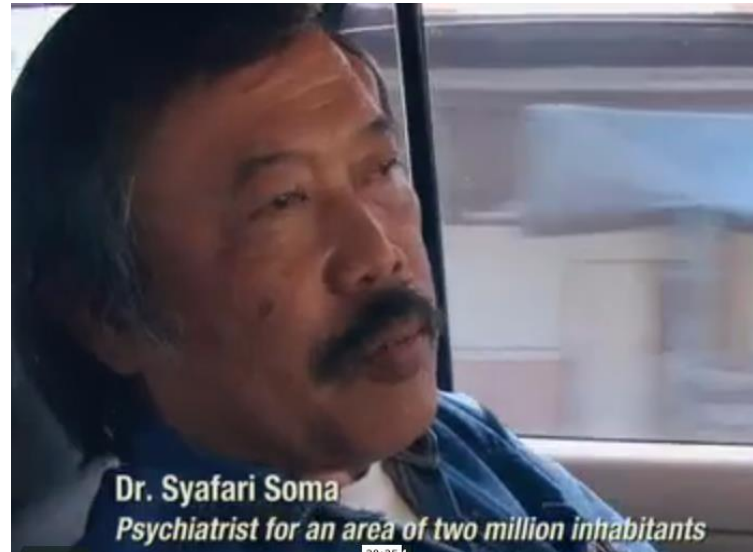


Nurhamid
Mental health service user
Co-founder of Komunitas Sehat Jiwa
(Community for people with mental illness)

“We will not surrender. We will keep on trying.” ~Nurhamid



“We are all humans”
~Pasung Victim Asep



Dr. Syafari Soma
Psychiatrist for an area of two million inhabitants

“Pasung violates human rights”
~ Dr Sayafari Soma

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Postcard

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Directed, Produced and Edited By:

Erminia Colucci

<http://movie-ment.org/breakingthechains/>



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Get Involved:
Movie-ment.org

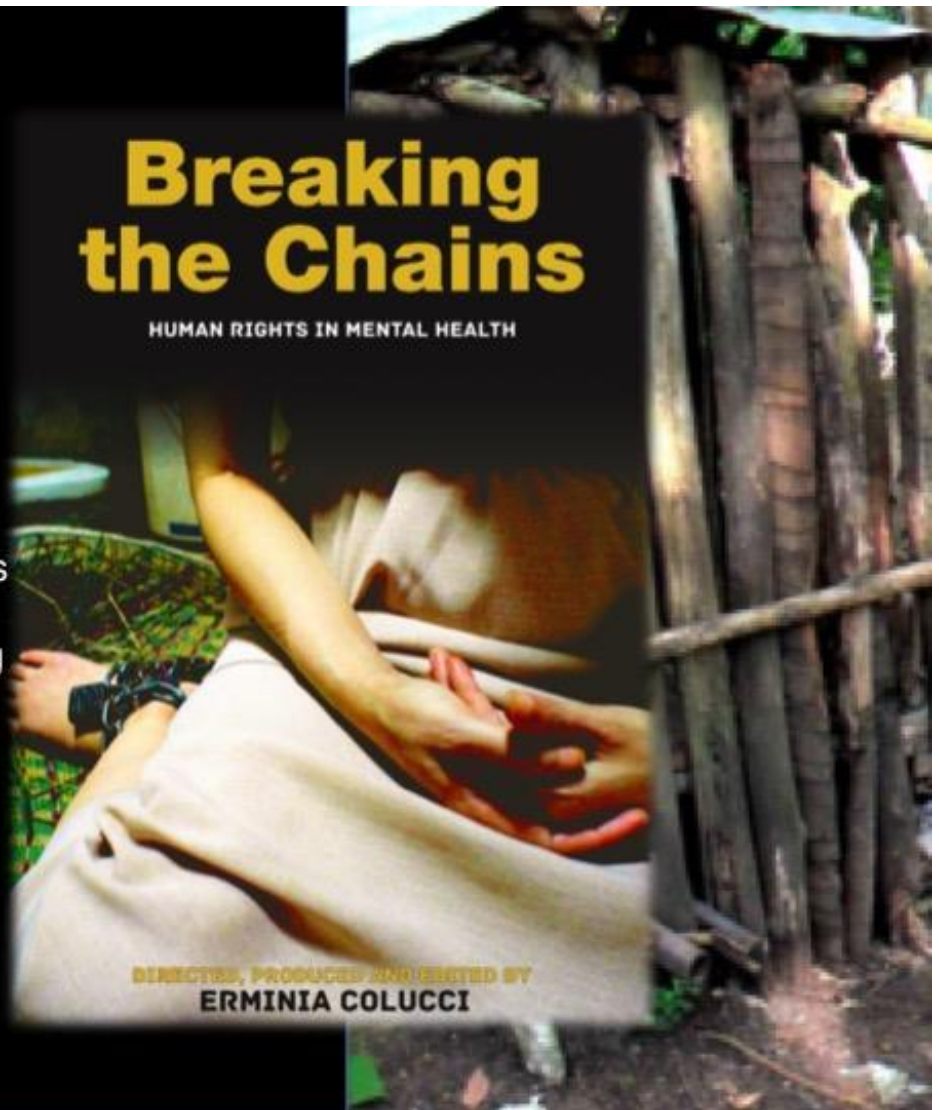
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Screening Flyer

Erminia Colucci

In rural Indonesia, local human rights and mental health activists fight to eliminate traditional practices of chaining and caging the mentally ill.



Film Data



Official Title: Breaking the Chains

Duration: 63' 47"

Languages: Bahasa (Indonesia), Sundanese, English, Italian, Arabic

Countries of Production: Indonesia/UK/Australia/Italy

Awards: One World Media Award in pre-production

Preview screenings: In addition to screenings at the WHO 2013 World Mental Health day (WHO headquarters in Geneva) and at other anthropology and mental health conferences and events (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, EASA Manchester), previews took place at the following:

- NAFA Festival September 2015
- AAS Film Expo 2014: Expanding Asia, Connecting Culture, 27 – 29 March 2014, Philadelphia, USA.
- Try Walking in My Shoes: Empathy and Portrayals of Mental Illness on Screen, 13-14 February 2014, Melbourne, Australia
- International Film Festival WATCH DOCS Human Rights in Film, 6-12 December 2013, Warsaw, Poland
- Göttingen International Ethnographic Film, 28 May-1 June 2013, Göttingen, Germany
- Aperture Asia-Pacific Ethnographic Documentary Festival, 21-23 Nov 2013 Melbourne (short version)
- Medfest 2015- London and 40 other countries (short version) 2015 (throughout the year)

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- ETHNOGRAFILM Festival, 8-12 April 2015, Paris (short version)
- Days of Ethnographic Film, 9-13 March 2015, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Kochi Biennale Foundation Ethnografilm, 17 June 2015, Kochi, India
- Nordic Anthropological Film Association Festival, 21-26 September 2015, Warsaw, Poland
- Rendezvous with Madness, 6-14 November 2015, Toronto, Canada

Background Information

Komunitas Sehat Jiwah

Nurhamid Karnaatmaja, a local teacher whose brother had suffered from mental health illness, founded KSJ in 2009. The core team includes Dr Syafari Soma—the only psychiatrist in a catchment area of over 2 million inhabitants—and Hadi Komara. KSJ coordinates its efforts with the Cianjur Welfare and Development and Health Department to provide medicine and support to *pasung* victims and their families. At the time of filming **Breaking the Chains**, KSJ had worked with families to release 117 people from *pasung*.

Pasung:

Pasung was officially banned in Indonesia in 1977, but continues to be a serious threat to human rights. It is estimated that over 50,000 people in Indonesia suffer under *pasung* and are in need of mental health services. The Indonesian government is one of the first of any low and middle-income countries to establish a

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national program to eradicate this practice. The Indonesian Government's Ministry of Social Affairs works with with local and overseas partners such as the Global and Cultural Mental Health Unit at the University of Melbourne in an effort to offer improved services for people with mental health issues. Pilot programs were successfully completed in several communities in 2013, and by 2017, which is the government goal through the 'Indonesia free from pasung' program, but more work needs to be done to eliminate *pasung* completely.

Stills



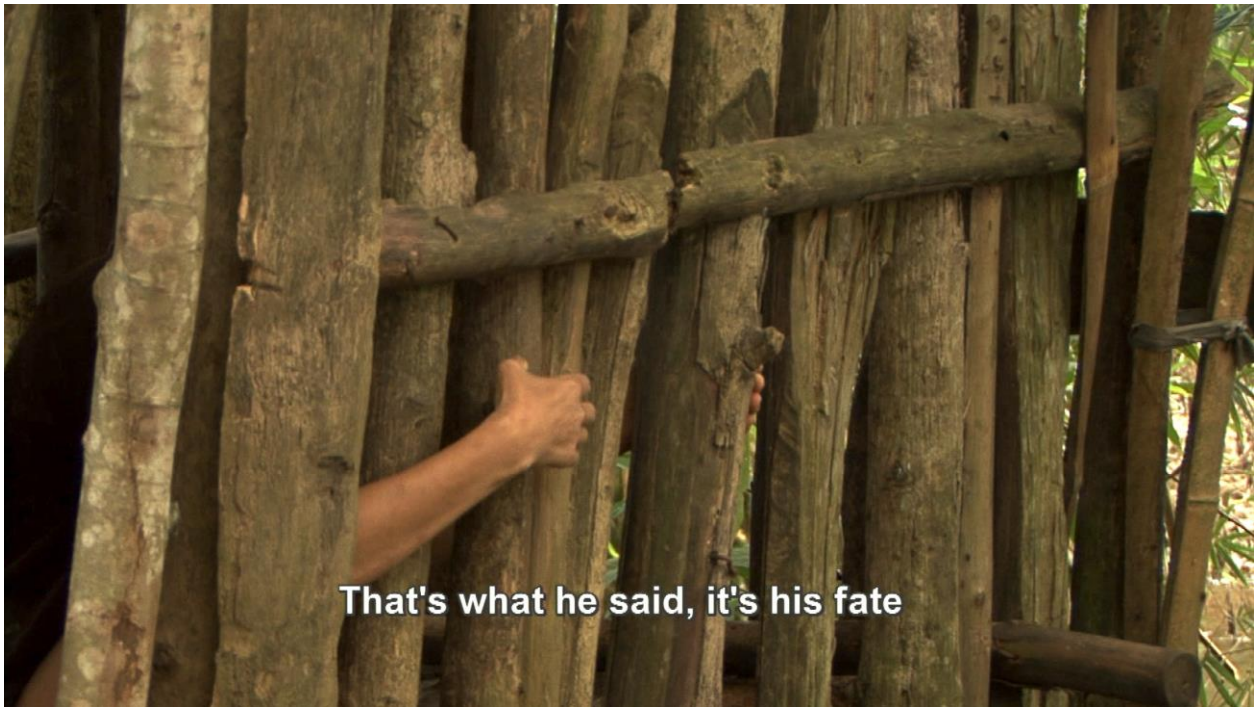
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